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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Quiapo fortune tellers can't agree on who'll win

SURVEY MAN O HULA, PAREHAS LANG PABAGO-BAGO!

By Norman Bordadora

EVEN THE seers and fortune tellers of Quiapo are divided as to who will win this year's presidential election.

Fortune teller William

QUIAPO/ A10

El Shaddai shepherd blesses Gloria, Loren

By Carlito Pablo and Blanche S. Rivera

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El Shaddai spiritual leader Bro. Mike Ve-

EL SHADDAI/ A10

PRESIDENTIAL candidates (from left) Eddie Villanueva, Raul Roco, Fernando Poe Jr., Panfilo Lacson and President Macapagal attend the "Unity Mass." VAL HANDUMON

GMA, foes unite in prayer

Bishop urges candidates to sacrifice ambition

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

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The Mass for Peace and Credible Elections that started at 12:30 p.m. was spearheaded by Manila Archbish-

GMA/ A9

Killings continue; Comelec sees 80-85% turnout

By Blanche S. Rivera *in Manila* **and PDI Northern Luzon and Visayas Bureaus**

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The PNP has listed 103 election-related violent incidents since the start of the election season. A total of 86 people have been killed and 159 have been wounded.

KILLINGS/ A10

ELEKSYON 2004 QUICK FACTS

7 a.m.	precincts open
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17, 656	elective posts **1**-president • **1**-vice president **12**-senators **209**-representatives **53**-representatives (party list) **79**-governors/vice governors **115**-city mayors/vice city mayors • **1,497**-municipal mayors/ mun. vice- mayors **742**-provincial board members **1,264**-city councilors **11,992**-municipal councilors
4	candidates for president
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Fraudulent polls to result in catastrophe

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

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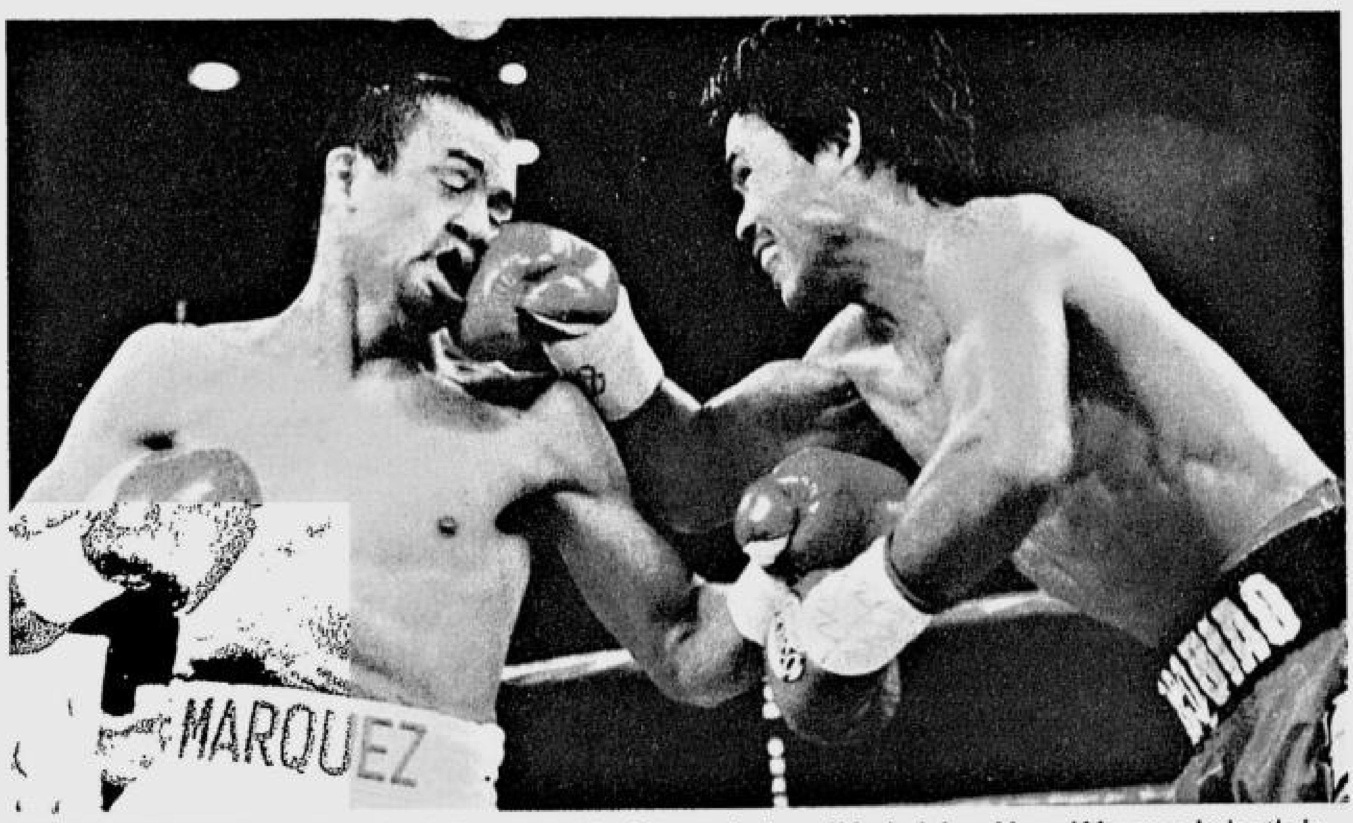
FRAUDULENT / A8



THE PHILIPPINES' Manny Pacquiao delivers a crushing blow to the face of Mexico's Juan Manuel Marquez during their world featherweight title fight in Las Vegas. AFP

Pacquiao opponent salvages draw

By Recah Trinidad

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He said he felt he had won the 12-round bout convincingly after flooring Marquez three times in the first round and landing hefty blows in the close, exciting bout. *(See related stories in Sports, A23-A24.)*

Marquez, showing up at the post-fight press conference with a swollen face while intermittently pushing an ice bag against his mouth, claimed he,

PACQUIAO / A8

For ₱1,000 fee, teachers endure threats, insults

By Volt Contreras

POLITICAL violence claimed 111 lives in the 2001 elections but three deaths went unmentioned in the official casualty toll.

They were the unborn children of three Metro Manila public schoolteachers who suffered miscarriages as a result of stress and harassment in the voting precincts, according to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT).

In Bacolod City, another female teacher fought off sleeplessness and fatigue in her rush to submit election returns to canvassers at City Hall—only to be raped by the driver of a tricycle she took going home at 4 a.m.

FOR P1,000/ A10

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FOR

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy skies with rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/10/04

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

General confirms poll fraud plan

By Christian V. Esguerra

A POLICE general has confirmed the purported plan to commit massive election fraud revealed Friday by three archbishops, leading a coalition for honest, orderly and peaceful elections.

But while the Coalition of Hope didn't say who were behind and who would benefit from the supposed plot, the official, a known ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo and a critic of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, was far from ambiguous.

"The President stands to benefit from the plan to be carried out by some members of the Philippine National Police," he said in an interview with the INQUIRER, on condition of anonymity.

During an "executive session" at a command conference last month, the general claimed that regional directors were given instructions "to do everything for GMA to win" in their respective areas of responsibility.

The information had come from some regional directors and lower-ranking police officers who personally told the PNP source about the alleged plan right after the conference.

Tapped to lead the supposed plan were three chief superintendents (one-star generals) and their men from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the Intelligence Group.

Director Robert Delfin, police director for intelligence, yesterday described the alleged plot by the PNP as "absurd." He dismissed the allegation as part of the political opposition's election propaganda.

"Exactly how will the police do that?" Delfin asked. "Will the police go to the polling precincts and snatch the ballots? I don't think so."

Basic plan

The basic plan, the source claimed, was for police to tamper with the voters' lists for a "massive disenfranchisement" of voters in known bailiwicks of opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. Local election officers are involved in the scheme, he said.

"As to how the men will further ensure the President's victory is up to what we call 'special operations,'" he said.

Archbishops Guadencio Rosales of Manila, Ricardo Vidal of Cebu and Fernando Capall, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, had warned of massive election fraud following a supposed meeting with active and retired military officers.

Two of the retired officers who had approached the bishops were later identified as former Army commanding officer Jaime de los Santos and Gen. Joachim Nazareno, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1969.

The bishops said cheating was planned in Calabarzon, Ilocos, Central Visayas and Southern Mindanao.

These areas, the PNP source explained, were perceived to be "vote-rich," especially for the opposition.

Another PNP general yesterday said the composition of the military officers who had floated the alleged election fraud plot—a mix of known Lacson allies—should explain the real motivation behind the allegation.

Lacson himself had bared the alleged plan which was curiously similar to the details provided by the military officers to the bishops.

Lacson supporters

Citing intelligence reports, he said it was Lacson's supporters in the PNP who had been plotting to cheat.

Last Friday, Lacson's mistah (classmate) in PMA Class 1971, had arranged a meeting with the chief of PNP Task Force Panay to discuss a supposed plan to rig the elections in the area in favor of the senator.

Several weeks ago, the source said several chiefs of police were offered P50,000 each to support the alleged plan.

"Lacson and his supporters came up with the false allegation simply because they knew it could work against them," the official said. "They did that before during the presidential election in 1998 and the senatorial election in 2001."

Asked to comment on the allegation that it was his supporters in the PNP who had been plotting to cheat, Lacson had this to say: "How can they do that when they are on floating status? That's a very stupid analysis. No wonder there is a failure of intelligence." *With Norman Bordadora*

Guard the vote, pleads GMA on polls' eve

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

AMID WARNINGS of massive poll fraud, President Macapagal-Arroyo appealed to the people on the eve of the elections to help guard the sanctity of the ballot and asked those who have foul intentions not to disturb the democratic exercise.

"I call on every concerned citizen to believe in the importance of his right to vote and I call on every person with violent plans to realize that the election is for the welfare of the people and must not be disturbed," the President said in a radio and television address after attending Mass with her four rivals at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros.

The President will cast her vote at the Lubao Elementary School in Pampanga this morning.

RELUCTANT PATIENT

Defying his doctors, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos left his sickbed last night insisting he would oversee today's elections. In photo, Abalos receives one of the two units of blood that were transfused into his body after he suffered blood loss when he collapsed at the Comelec offices on Friday night.

JESS YUSON

Abalos defies doctors, leaves hospital bed

By Blanche S. Rivera

COMMISSION on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. defied doctors' orders last night and checked out of the Manila Doctors Hospital to oversee the polls today.

Abalos, who was diagnosed only yesterday with diverticulosis, a gastrointestinal injury, will report for work at his office at the Palacio del Gobernador in Intramuros today, starting his day with a press briefing at 9:30 a.m., according to his daughter, Girlie Abalos.

Abalos was up and about in his room to disprove speculations that his admission to the hospital had been part of a possible no-elections plot.

"Some people are very mean, calling to ask me if this was part of the no-elections plot. That is too much. Even assuming that something happens to me, the commission will go on, you still have six commissioners," Abalos said in a short interview with reporters in his hospital suite.

Abalos passed out at the Comelec building the other night and started bleeding heavily from the nose and anus. He underwent a blood transfusion, finishing two units of blood as of yesterday afternoon.

Doctors said the bleeding was caused by the out-pouching of the wall of the large intestine, a condition called diverticulosis.

Abalos's physician-son, Dr. Arnold Abalos, said there was no known direct cause of the diverticulosis, but the condition is usually age-related.

Arnold said the stress suffered by his father in his job may have aggravated his condition. The chairman has had gastric ulcers since his college days but laboratory tests showed the ulcer was not active and did not cause the bleeding.

"If it were up to us, we would want him to rest for a longer time, but he is ready to disobey doctors' orders," the younger Abalos said.

The early treatment Abalos received saved him from suffering greater damage and blood loss, his son said. The bleeding, however, could recur if the wound in the intestine opened up again, he added.

About 80 percent of those with diverticulosis experience spontaneous healing.

"Let us hope he is one of the 80 percent," Arnold said.

Supreme Court says no to Comelec quick count

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has ordered the Commission on Elections not to proceed with its plan to conduct a quick count of today's election results after hearing oral arguments on the case for more than five hours on Saturday.

In a three-page en banc resolution, the SC maintained its status quo order against the Comelec plan and even "expanded" it to "cover any and all other (Comelec) issuances" about its electronic quick count project.

The SC handed down the decision after four of the seven-member Comelec expressed reservations over the poll body's decision to conduct a quick count of the results of the May 10 elections.

The four were Commissioners Florentino Tuazon, Manuel Barcelona Jr., Resurreccion Borra and Victorino Garcillano.

The high court also found that the Comelec failed to formally inform candidates that it was going to conduct a quick count through the electronic transmission (ET) of election results as required by law.

The SC also ordered Comelec Commissioner Mehol Sadain to immediately submit copies of the notices Comelec allegedly issued to political parties about its quick count; its contract with Philippine Multi-Media System Inc., which will provide the hardware for the electronic transmission of election results, and the minutes of the Comelec en banc meeting on April 28, when the poll body adopted its resolution authorizing its quick count.

The SC said it considers the case "submitted for decision" based on its merits.

The SC maintained its status quo order after the National Movement for Free Elections, Senate President Franklin Drilon, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, and the country's seven major political parties asked the SC to stop the Comelec from conducting a quick count.

The political parties included the administration Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Aksyon Demokratiko, the Nationalist People's Coalition, the Liberal Party, Bangon Pilipinas and the Partido Democratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

In their petition, the political parties said the quick count should be junked since the money that the Comelec was going to use for it was "unappropriated and are not covered by a specific certificate of availability of funds."

In opposing the quick count, Drilon and De Venecia argued that the Comelec would encroach on Congress' "sole and exclusive authority" to canvass the votes for President and Vice President if it released the results in these races.

The political parties also said that the Comelec did not notify them that it was going to conduct a quick count through ET.

Under the Omnibus Election Code, the Comelec is required to inform all political parties and candidates 30 days prior to the polls if they are going to use a new technology in the elections.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. was present during the hearing but sat among the audience. Sadain represented the Comelec at the hearing.

AbayPamilya is certified party-list group

THE ROSTER of party-list candidates that appeared in the May 9 issue of the INQUIRER was based on the Comelec list issued on May 4 which did not include the AbayPamilya Foundation Inc.

As per Comelec Resolution 6760 promulgated on May 5, AbayPamilya has been included in the party-list participants, as well as Federation of Land Reform Farmers, Sandigang Maralita and Tribal Communities Association of the Philippines. This brings to 65 the total number of party-list groups contending in the elections.

Niretoke.
Dinagdagan.
Binawasan.
'Di tulad nito, wala nang dagdag-bawas sa boto mo.
Halalan 2004

Eleksyon na naman. 'Di piring ang ating mga mata sa mga pandarayang tulad ng dagdag-bawas. Dahil dito, 'di lalabas ang tunay na tinig ng tao.

Ngayon sa Halalan 2004, may sistema ang Comelec laban sa dagdag-bawas.

Gagamit ng mga computers para makuha at TV monitoring para mabantayan ang bilangan. May VSAT kung saan gagamit ng *satellite transmission* para masiguradong ligtas at mabilis ang pagpapadala ng boto sa lahat ng mga munisipyo at siyudad.

Ang mga ito'y paniguro ng Comelec para kung anong ibinoto ay siya ring bibilangin.

"Boto ating bantayan. Taumbayan, Comelec inyong tulungan upang makamtan malinis na halalan."

– Hon. Benjamin S. Abalos
Chairman, COMELEC

Commission on Elections
www.comelec.gov.ph

To find your precinct, visit www.findprecinct.com, or text FindP to 2958 for Globe, 211 for Smart, and 2300 for Sun Cellular.
For election results, visit www.halalan2004.net.ph, or text Result to 2993 for Globe and 386 for Smart.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, MAY 10, 2004

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

FRONTPAGE

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Lacson supporters

Citing intelligence reports, he said it was Lacson's supporters in the PNP who had been plotting to cheat.

Last Friday, Lacson's mistah (classmate) in PMA Class 1971, had … a meeting with the chief … PNP Task Force Panay to discuss … posed plan to rig the elections … area in favor of the senator … several weeks ago, the source said … chiefs of police were offered P50,000 to … support the alleged plan … Lacson and his supporters … an… … allegation simply beca… could work against the… ficial said. "They did … before … the p… ntial elect… senatorial election … 001 … upp… plott… say "How … are on the … pid … lu…

With Norman Bordadora

Guard the vote, pleads GMA on polls' eve

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

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RELUCTANT PATIENT

Defying his doctors, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos left his sickbed last night insisting he would oversee today's elections. In photo, Abalos receives one of the two units of blood that were transfused into his body after he suffered blood loss when he collapsed at the Comelec offices on Friday night.

Abalos defies doctors, leaves hospital bed

By Blanche S. Rivera

Supreme Court says no to Comelec quick count

By Philip C. Tubeza

Th…

Bo… … Wa… the…

AbayPamilya is certified party-list group

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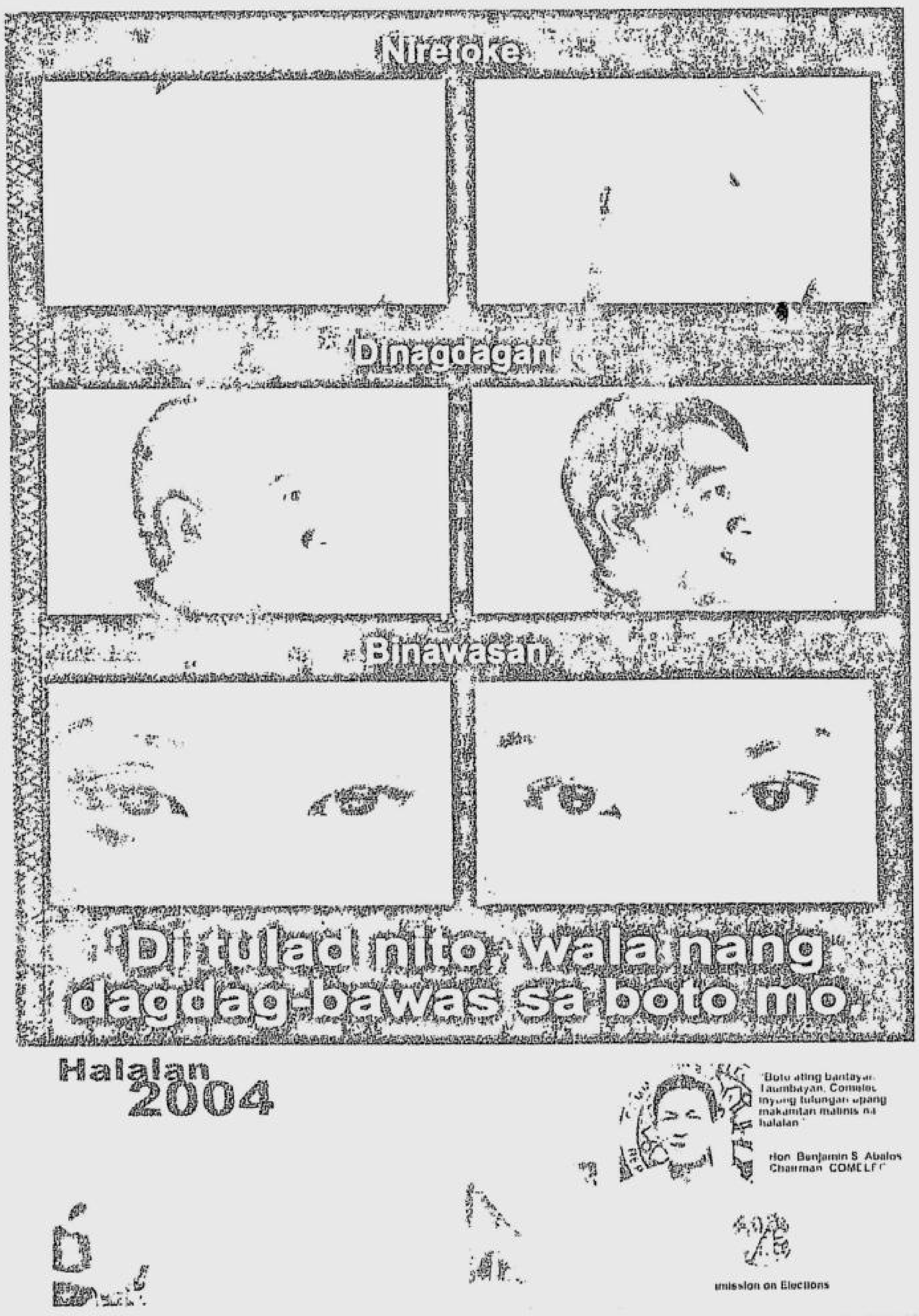

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Halalan 2004

"Boto ating bantayan. Taumbayan, Comelec inyong tulungan upang makamtan malinis na halalan."

Hon. Benjamin S. Abalos
Chairman COMELEC

Commission on Elections

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dislike for a bet doesn't necessarily mean he will lose

By Dean Amado D. Valdez

(The author is a former dean at the University of the East College of Law – Ed.)

WHILE MANY believe in the reliability of scientifically conducted surveys, there is a peculiar observation which had escaped their notice.

For one, the Pulse Asia Survey on the senatorial candidates for the period April 26-29 seemed to indicate that the bets who were disliked the most had the better chance of landing in the Magic 12.

Take the case of John Osmeña who ranked no. 7 in the survey. His awareness rating among the voters was 100 percent, but only 29.8 percent said they would vote for him. The balance of 70.2 percent apparently disliked him.

On the other hand, in the case of Heherson Alvarez, who came in at no. 19 in the survey, only 64 percent of the voters were aware that he was running, and of this 14.1 percent said they would vote for him. Thus, 49.9 percent dislike him or would not vote for him, but this bloc was far smaller than the 70.2 percent who dislike Osmeña, who had a 100 percent awareness rating. The conclusion one can draw is that if Alvarez were to increase his awareness rating, his acceptance rating would likewise go up.

Mar Roxas, who occupied the no. 1 spot in the survey, had an awareness rating of 99 percent, but he was not necessarily the best liked, since only 48.9 percent of those who knew him said they were voting for him. This gave him a 50.1 percent "dislike" rating, which was slightly higher than those who disliked Alvarez.

Ironically, nine of those more likely to be elected as shown by the Pulse Asia survey appeared to have the greater number of voters who disliked them or would not vote for them. Aside from Osmeña, who was no. 2 in the "dislike" hierarchy, the top ten included Pia Cayetano, whom 68.6 percent said they would not vote for; Jinggoy Estrada 67.1 percent, Miriam Santiago 64.7 percent, Richard Gordon 64.3 percent, Jamby Madrigal 61 percent, Aquilino Pimentel 60.9 percent, Lito Lapid 60.7 percent and Ramon Revilla Jr. 56.4 percent.

Number one on the "dislike list," however, was Robert Jaworski. He had an awareness rating of 100 percent but only 22.8 percent said they would vote for him. In other words, 77.2 percent will not vote for him. Jaworski was not entering into the "Magic 12" but his ads showed a deliberate effort to make more people like him in order to offset his dislike rating.

If the twenty-two senatorial candidates were students in a classroom, the top five who would be retained in class because they had smaller percentages of voters who disliked them were Fred Lim 49.7 percent, Alvarez 49.9 percent, Roxas 50.1 percent, Kit Tatad 52.9 percent, and Orly Mercado 54.1 percent.

This analysis indicates that there could be a substantial shift in voter preferences in today's elections if candidates like Alvarez, Tatad and Mercado succeed in making at least 20 percent of those who dislike them change their minds about them. This means they have to raise their awareness level by another 20 percent. The question is, can they do this in 24 hours?

The moral of this analysis: Think before you vote—disregard the surveys.

Erap not allowed to vote

By Martin P. Marfil

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada will not be able to vote today after the Commission on Elections decided that allowing him to do so would set a precedent for other detainees to make a similar request.

Although the Sandiganbayan allowed Estrada to vote, it had forbidden him from leaving his detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, to cast his vote.

The commission is not about to put up an election precinct inside the military camp because "we do not have the resources," said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos on Friday.

"We won't allow the setting up of polling precincts in all the jails. If we grant Mr. Estrada's request, then we have to grant the other requests," Abalos said. "We don't even have enough people to do that. Capinpin is outside Metro Manila. What about (former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov.) Nur Misuari, in case he asks. Would we have to put up a voting center for him as well?" he said.

Misuari is currently detained on rebellion charges at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

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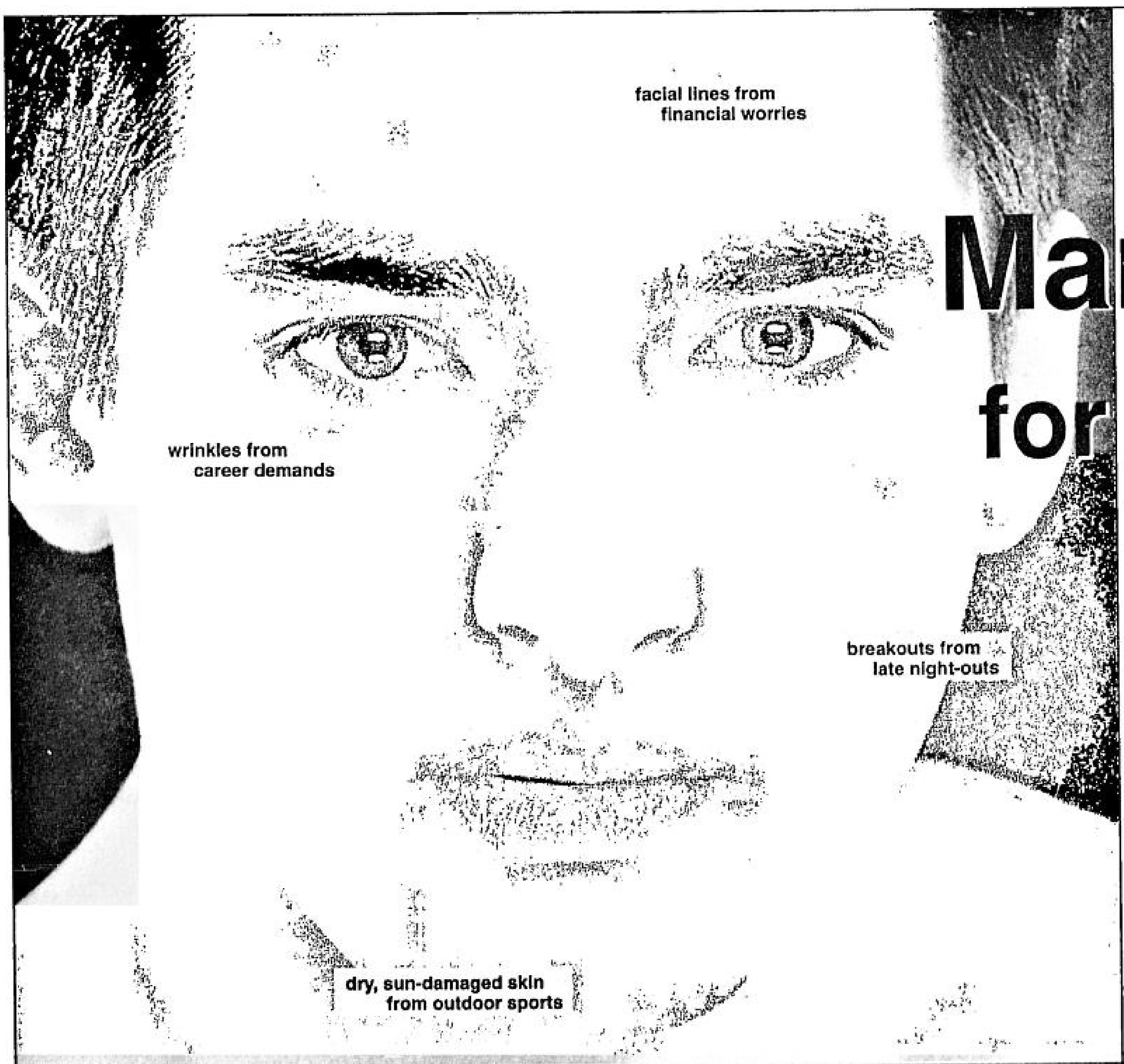

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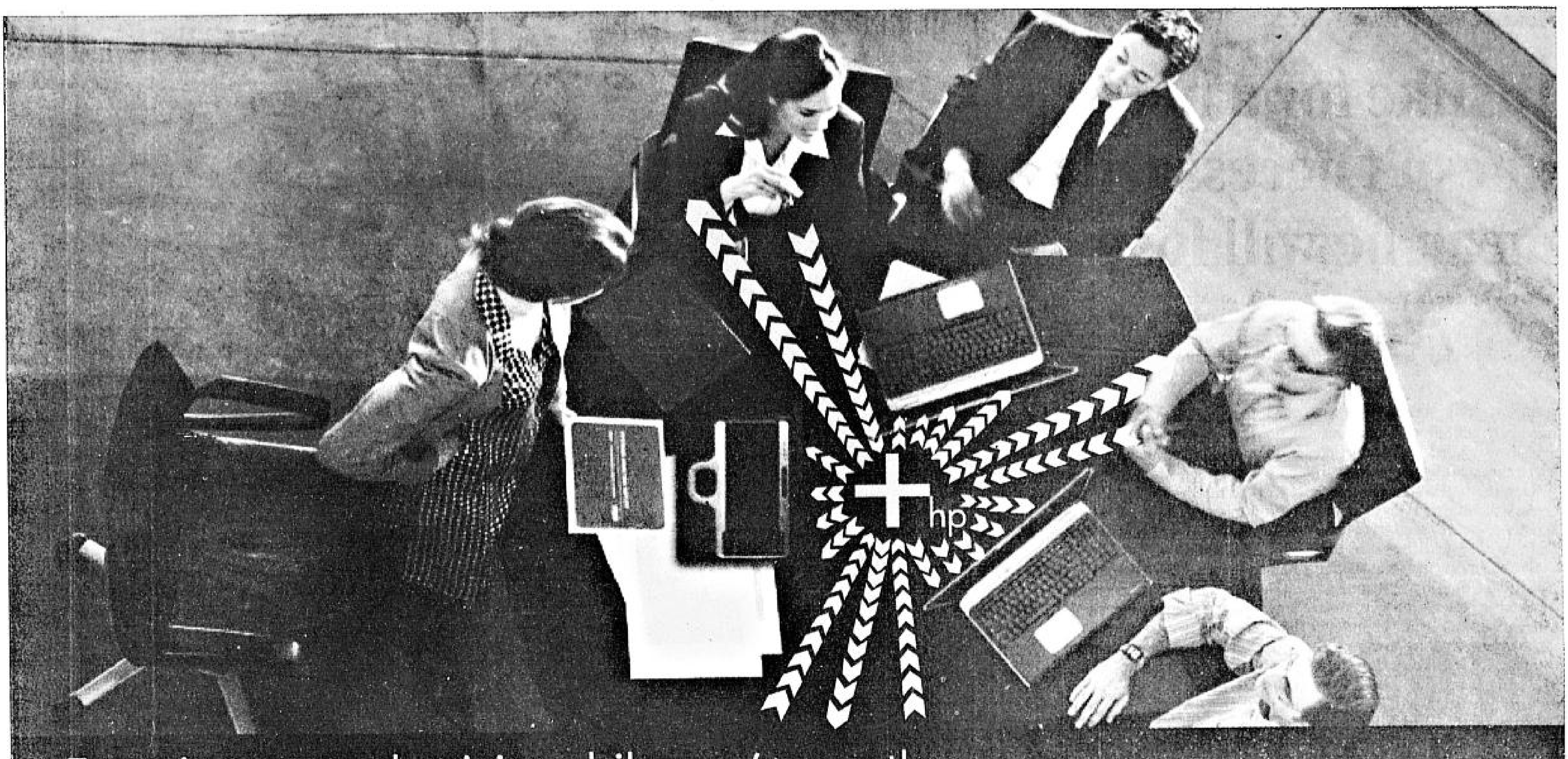

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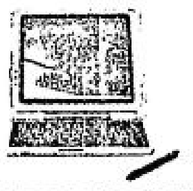

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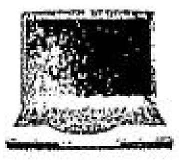

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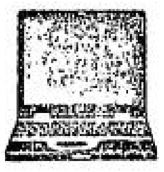

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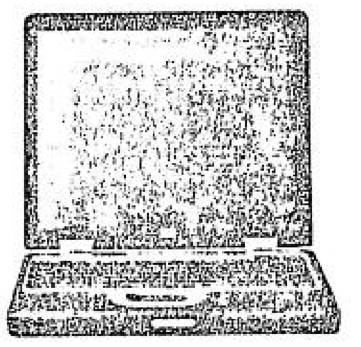

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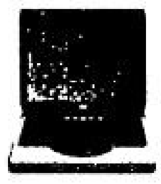

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West Point set to welcome first Pinay cadet

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Cristy Isis Achanzar, 22, beat 50 contenders to become the first woman Philippine Military Academy cadet to be accepted to West Point's foreign service program, the same US institution former President Fidel Ramos graduated from.

The first Filipino cadet to graduate abroad was Hannah Lea Alerta, a member of PMA Class of 2002, who completed her military course last year at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Achanzar, third-class cadet in PMA Class 2007, will enter an evolved West Point whose atmosphere is different from the PMA, said public relations officer Navy Lt. Alvin Lopez

Lopez, who's a 1995 graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy, said they had started to include more military courses in the West Point curriculum, a policy change which came after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

In contrast, Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, PMA superintendent, had introduced a more streamlined curriculum at the PMA, focusing on language, mathematics and more civics-oriented subjects.

Achanzar said the changes at West Point "scare her" but she is prepared.

She commented that Mindanao had always been the focus of the country's political and economic conflicts, "which made me want to change things even if Davao itself is peaceful (compared to the rest of the island's provinces)." Achanzar was born in Davao.

It was her father's wish that she obtain a degree in electronics and communications engineering at Davao's University of the Immaculate Concepcion before signing up with the PMA.

But Achanzar had already decided on a career in the military when she was 14.

These days, the military forbids the Army's infantry from assigning women to go into combat, she said. "They are sometimes (assigned only to) the offices," she lamented.

Achanzar wants to change all that because she intends to pursue more combat duties as soon as she graduates from West Point.

On June 28, she will join her mistah (classmate), third-class cadet Mario Mokhtarian Feliciano of Zamboanga City, who is also included in the 1,200 new West Point cadets this year.

'Busy' mayor fails to answer raps

MAYOR Jaime R. Fresnedi of Muntinlupa City has failed to answer the plunder and graft charges filed against him by a former city councilor within the "inextendible" 10-day period set by the Ombudsman because he was "busy."

Instead, the mayor pleaded with the Ombudsman to extend the deadline to submit his counter-affidavit.

Fresnedi filed a motion seeking additional time on May 3, the deadline set by the Ombudsman for him to answer the cases of plunder and malversation of public funds filed against him by Rafael Arciaga, who is not seeking reelection.

The two cases charge Fresnedi with illegal use of the P486-million Special Education Fund (SEF) from 1998 to 2002; having unliquidated and disallowed cash advances amounting to P482 million; being responsible for missing assets and property of the city government amounting to P1.38 billion, and failure to remit teachers' and city employees' contributions to the GSIS, BIR, PhilHealth and Pag-Ibig totaling P37 million.

In his motion asking for additional time, Fresnedi said he was "busy" with his "workload" to answer the plunder charges.

The Office of the Ombudsman had issued an order to Fresnedi directing him to answer the charges after finding sufficient evidence to proceed with the cases.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 10, 2004
5th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 14:5-18
Gospel: Jn 14:21-26

Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever keeps my commandments is the one who loves me. If he loves me, he will also be loved by my Father; I too shall love him and show myself clearly to him."

Judas—not the Iscariot—asked Jesus, "Lord, how can it be that you will show yourself clearly to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him; and we will come to him and make a room in his home. But if anyone does not love me, he will not keep my words, and these words that you hear are not mine but the Father's who sent me.

"I told you all this while I was still with you. From now on the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I have told you."

Commentary

I once remarked idly to someone who was telling me the troubles of her heart, "Love is blind." "No!" she said sharply, "No! Love is not blind. Lovers are blind. If you say love is blind, you are saying that God is blind." It was a good lesson. Love is a kind of deeper seeing. Perhaps that's why it looks like blindness to us who see only the surface. "If anyone loves me," Jesus said, "I shall show myself clearly to them." And if anyone just thinks about me (we could add) they may pass exams in theology but they will not know me at all. Ordinary seeing and understanding are the view from the outside. Love is the view from the inside. It is less well able to compare and to see limits; it is less canny, less "political." For that reason it is sometimes imprudent and even mad. The madness of love is a major theme in every literature.

The power of love came into me
He said, 'You're not mad enough.
You don't belong in this house.' (Rumi)

But it is a divine madness, deeper and larger-souled than all our reasoning. St. Catherine of Siena imagined God to be mad. "You are madly in love with the beauty of your creatures." (If love is mad, God is mad!)

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Voluntary surrender—the mitigating circumstance of voluntary surrender requires that: (a) the offender has not been actually arrested; (b) the offender surrenders himself to a person in authority or the latter's agent and (c) the surrender is voluntary. The essence of voluntary surrender is spontaneity, the intent of the accused being to give himself up and submit unconditionally to the authorities, either because he acknowledges his guilt or he wants to save the state the trouble of having to effect his arrest In the case at bar, the appellant's alleged surrender to the barangay chair was not voluntary. On the contrary, it was solely motivated by self-preservation from what he feared was an imminent retaliation from the immediate relatives of Afredo. Consequently, the same cannot be appreciated in his favor. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Corona, Third Division, People vs Dela Cruz, G. R. No. 140513, November 18, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

Our population clock is ticking...

As we went to press this midnight, there were 84,025,175 Filipinos.
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PCCI COMMITTEE ON POPULATION. CSR AND GOVERNANCE ◆ MAY 10, 2004

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Priests, nuns deployed as poll watchers in Cebu

By Bernadette Parco, Joey Gabieta, Raj Padilla and Romy Amarado,
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—As part of "Operation Tutok," seminarians, priests and nuns will be deployed as poll watchers in various precincts in Cebu in an effort to deter electoral fraud even as elections and law enforcement officials in this city and the rest of the Visayas pledged to ensure clean and honest polls.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal said that at least one poll watcher will be fielded in every precinct alongside volunteers of C-Cimpel, Cebu's counterpart of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Lay and religious volunteers have been assigned to monitor the transport of the Certificate of Election returns and to prevent fraud in vote counting, particularly for president and vice president.

Vidal, along with Archbishops Fernando Capalla and Gaudencio Rosales, formed the Coalition for Honest and Peaceful Elections (Hope) after highly placed officials in the military informed them that certain candidates would engage in massive fraud on Election Day.

Among the modus operandi to be used to commit poll fraud include giving voters misleading information, padding of voters' lists, use of over-printed ballots, turning away eligible voters through de-listing or re-assignment, vote-buying, threats and blackmail.

Other schemes involve multiple voting, replacement of valid Certificates of Canvass (COCs) and CERs with fake documents, replacement of valid ballots with fake votes and tampering with official election results through *dagdag-bawas* (adding votes to one candidate by shaving the votes of another).'

Vidal said they were also informed by representatives of a coalition of public school teachers that the Commission on Elections printed one million ballots for the use by teachers although there were only around 400,000 public school teachers nationwide.

"Our purpose of coming out in public about the information that we received is to also let the planners know that we know all about it and at the same time alert the people. I appeal to the people concerned not to do it for the sake of our nation, of our children and grandchildren and the future generations," Vidal said.

"We do not know if it is the administration or the opposition who is behind the planned fraud; it is not yet clear but what is clear is what some people are going to do," he said.

Vidal earlier revealed that Central Visayas (Region 7) was included in the list of "critical areas" where massive fraud would be perpetrated. Also included are the Ilocos region, Calabarzon and Southern Mindanao.

Meanwhile, Comelec officials in Central, Western (Region 6) and Eastern Visayas (Region 8) expressed readiness for today's elections despite "some problems."

Negros Oriental elections supervisor Manuel Advincula said police and Army personnel have been deployed in 50 villages in the province declared as areas of concern.

Lawyer Ferdinand Rafanan, Comelec-8 director, told the INQUIRER that there was a shortage of "accountable forms" like official ballots and election returns in some far-flung municipalities in the region.

NADIA
WILL
YOU
MARRY
ME?
LACS

LOVE ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL
It's not all war on the hustings as Today reporter Daxim Lucas proves. Here he proposes to ABS-CBN reporter Nadia Trinidad during Sen. Panfilo Lacson's party for the media on Saturday night. Trinidad said yes.

Teachers may vote in assigned precincts

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TO AVERT a possible massive disenfranchisement of teachers in Metro Manila, the Commission on Elections yesterday decided at the last minute to allow teachers to vote in their assigned precincts even if they were not registered voters of that city or municipality.

The Comelec en banc issued the "urgent public advisory" Thursday afternoon which in effect set aside an old election rule that required teachers to be registered voters in the precincts they are stationed at before they could vote.

"Public and private school teachers and other members of the Board of Election Inspectors who are registered in cities or municipalities other than their places of assignment may vote for candidates for national positions only," Comelec's urgent public advisory said.

"They shall be considered local absentee voters like members of the police and the military," the advisory added.

About 600,000 teachers would serve as the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) on Monday, election day. Of this, about 450,000 are public school teachers.

Until Thursday afternoon, tens of thousands of public school teachers were awaiting word from the Comelec on whether they could serve at all as BEIs in Metro Manila and surrounding urban centers.

Unknown to the teachers and even the Department of Education, the Comelec issued a memorandum on April 20 that said teachers could not serve as BEIs in a precinct if they were not residents in that precinct's city or municipality.

This was based on an electoral rule which observers believe was outdated.

Of the estimated 25,000 teachers assigned as BEIs in Metro Manila, most live outside the cities.

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Education Undersecretary Jose Luis Gascon, who heads the DepEd's elections task force, said if the Comelec had not come out with a clear public declaration, they would have advised non-resident teachers not to serve as BEIs.

After several meetings, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos promised to issue an advisory on Thursday, just three days before the elections.

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Priests, nuns deployed as poll watchers in Cebu

By Bernadette Parco, Joey Gabieta, Raj Padilla and Romy Amarado,
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—As part of "Operation Tutok," seminarians, priests and nuns will be deployed as poll watchers in various precincts in Cebu in an effort to deter electoral fraud even as elections and law enforcement officials in this city and the rest of the Visayas pledged to ensure clean and honest polls.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal said that at least one poll watcher will be fielded in every precinct alongside volunteers of C-Cimpel, Cebu's counterpart of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Lay and religious volunteers have been assigned to monitor the transport of the Certificate of Election returns and to prevent fraud in vote counting, particularly for president and vice president.

Vidal, along with Archbishops Fernando Capalla and Gaudencio Rosales, formed the Coalition for Honest and Peaceful Elections (Hope) after highly placed officials in the military informed them that certain candidates would engage in massive fraud on Election Day.

Among the modus operandi to be used to commit poll fraud include giving voters misleading information, padding of voters' lists, use of over-printed ballots, turning away eligible voters through de-listing or re-assignment, vote-buying, threats and blackmail.

Other schemes involve multiple voting, replacement of valid Certificates of Canvass (COCs) and CERs with fake documents, replacement of valid ballots with fake votes and tampering with official election results through *dagdag-bawas* (adding votes to one candidate by shaving the votes of another).'

Vidal said they were also informed by representatives of a coalition of public school teachers that the Commission on Elections printed one million ballots for the use by teachers although there were only around 400,000 public school teachers nationwide.

"Our purpose of coming out in public about the information that we received is to also let the planners know that we know all about it and at the same time alert the people. I appeal to the people concerned not to do it for the sake of our nation, of our children and grandchildren and the future generations." Vidal said.

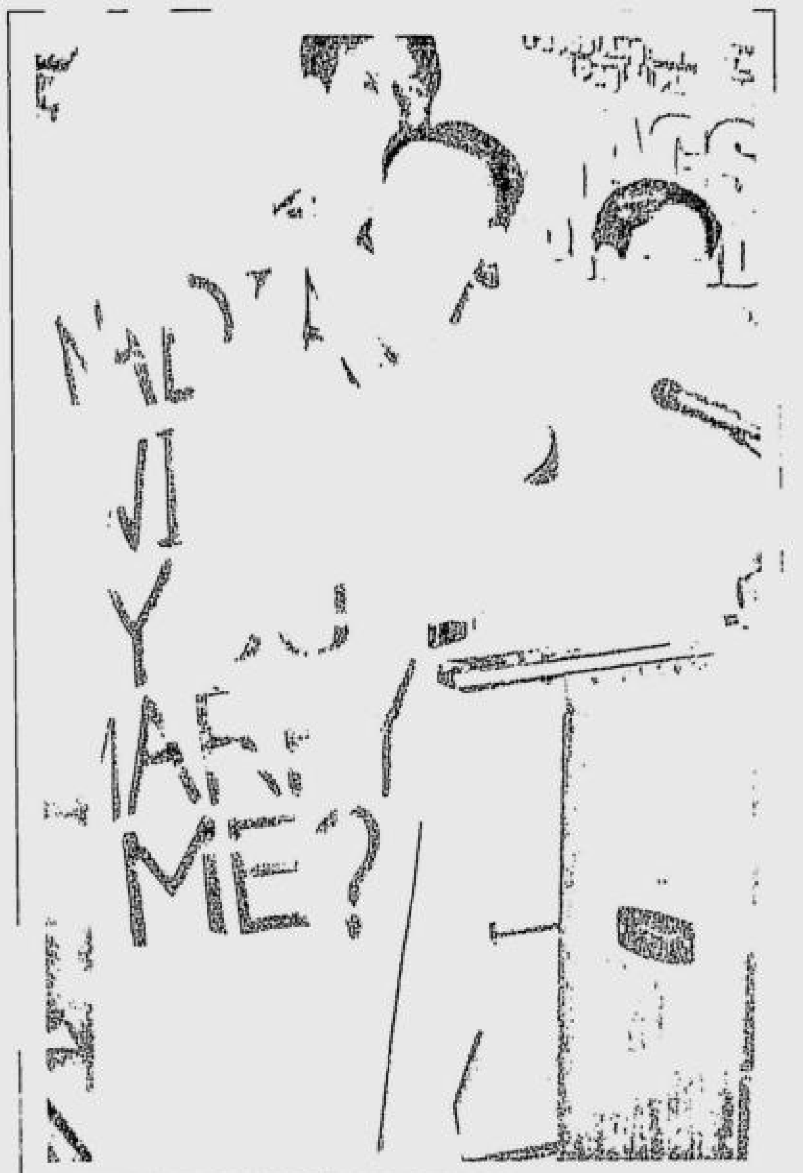
"We do not know if it is the administration or the opposition who is behind the planned fraud; it is not yet clear but what is clear is what some people are going to do," he said.

Vidal earlier revealed that Central Visayas Region 7) was included in the list of "critical areas" where massive fraud would be perpetrated. Also included are the Ilocos region, Calabarzon and Southern Mindanao.

Meanwhile, Comelec officials in Central, Western (Region 6) and Eastern Visayas (Region 8) expressed readiness for today's elections despite "some problems."

Negros Oriental elections supervisor Manuel Advincula said police and Army personnel have been deployed in 50 villages in the province declared as areas of concern.

Lawyer Ferdinand Rafanan, Comelec-8 director, told the INQUIRER that there was a shortage of "accountable forms" like official ballots and election returns in some far-flung municipalities in the region.



LOVE ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL
It's not all war on the hustings as Today reporter Daxim Lucas proves. Here he proposes to ABS-CBN reporter Nadia Trinidad during Sen. Panfilo Lacson's party for the media on Saturday night. Trinidad said yes.

Teachers may vote in assigned precincts

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TO AVERT a possible massive disenfranchisement of teachers in Metro Manila, the Commission on Elections yesterday decided at the last minute to allow teachers to vote in their assigned precincts even if they were not registered voters of that city or municipality.

The Comelec en banc issued the "urgent public advisory" Thursday afternoon which in effect set aside an old election rule that required teachers to be registered voters in the precincts they are stationed at before they could vote.

"Public and private school teachers and other members of the Board of Election Inspectors who are registered in cities or municipalities other than their places of assignment may vote for candidates for national positions only," Comelec's urgent public advisory said.

"They shall be considered local absentee voters like members of the police and the military," the advisory added.

About 600,000 teachers would serve as the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) on Monday, election day. Of this, about 450,000 are public school teachers.

Until Thursday afternoon, tens of thousands of public school teachers were awaiting word from the Comelec on whether they could serve at all as BEIs in Metro Manila and surrounding urban centers

Unknown to the teachers and even the Department of Education, the Comelec issued memorandum on Apr. 20 that said teachers could not serve as BEIs in a precinct if they were not residents in that precinct's city or municipality

This was based on an electoral rule which observers believe was outdated.

Of the estimated 25,000 teachers assigned as BEIs in Metro Manila, most live outside the cities.

The Comelec would have been hard-pressed to replace them so close to election day, which could have resulted in a failure of elections in several precincts

Education Undersecretary Jose Luis Gascon, who heads the DepEd's elections task force, said if the Comelec had not come out with a clear public declaration they would have advised non-resident teachers not to serve as BEIs.

After several meetings, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos promised to issue an advisory on Thursday just three day

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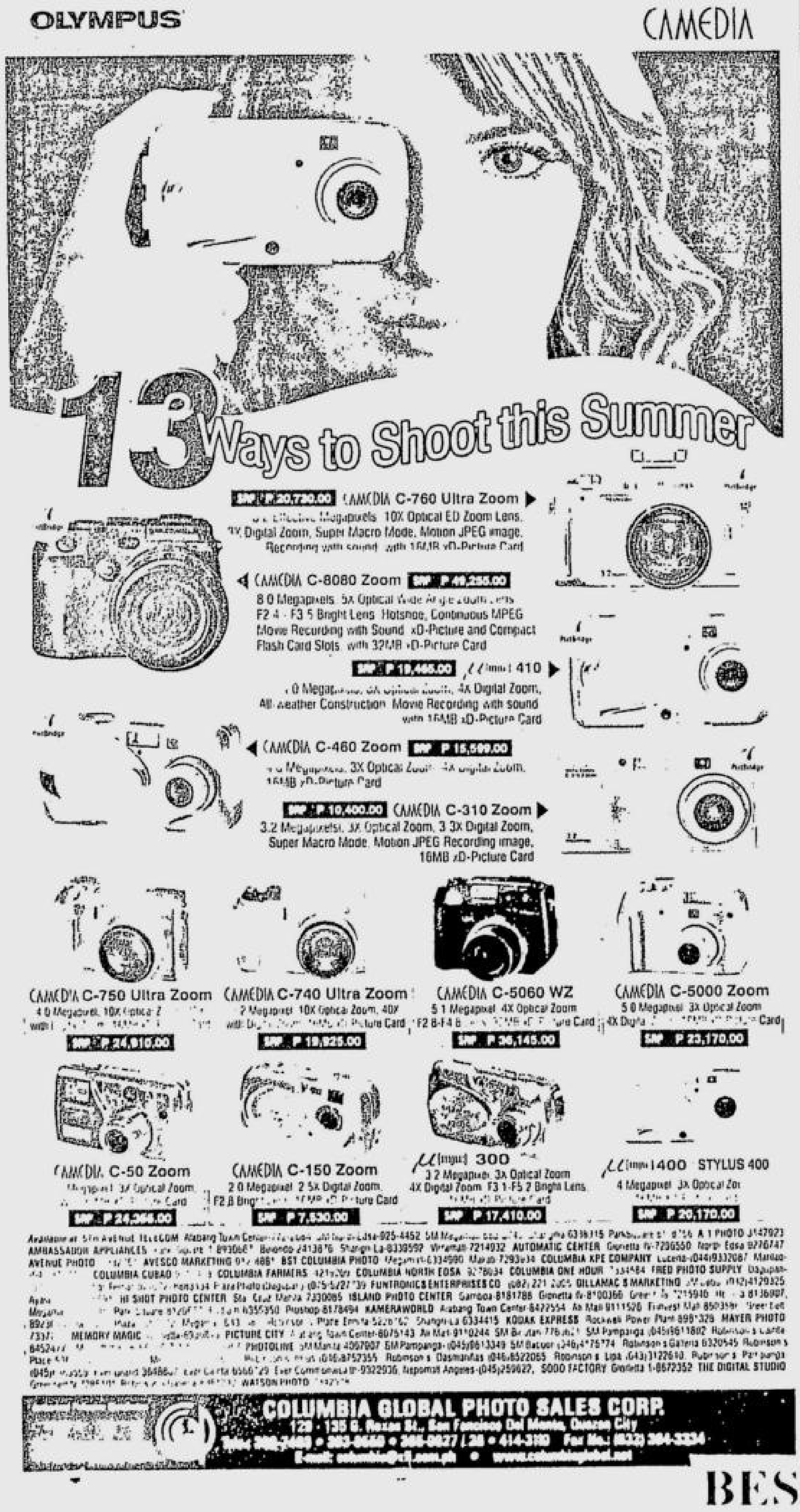

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UK warns on travel to RP due to polls

By Jerome Aning

THE UNITED Kingdom renewed its travel warning on the Philippines over the weekend, citing among other reasons the political tension surrounding today's national elections.

"Election-related violence has resulted in over 80 deaths during the run-up to the 10 May elections. Political tension surrounding the elections is likely to continue through the vote-counting period, which could take a month," said UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The ministry noted that Philippine authorities were on high alert in case of political unrest and security incidents and had issued warnings about purported bomb threats in Metro Manila and elsewhere.

The advisory, dated May 7, also said there was a general threat of terrorism and kidnapping throughout the Philippines.

"There continue to be threats against western interests and there is a danger of collateral damage from terrorist attacks targeted at others," the FCO said.

Britons were told to be particularly vigilant in all public places and when traveling.

The FCO reiterated its ban on all travel to central, southern and western Mindanao, to Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu.

Party-list groups say they're targets

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The party-list group Bayan Muna and five other party-list organizations are the targets of vote-shaving and electoral fraud to prevent them from getting more seats in the House, their leaders said in a press conference here Saturday.

Roman Polintan, a Bayan Muna nominee, said the "red-baiting" by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, the black propaganda by the military and police, and the series of killings and disappearances of 41 leaders were indications of efforts to "prevent us from winning in the May 10 polls."

Polintan said the party-list groups Anakpawis, Anak ng Bayan, Gabriela, Migrante and Suara Bangsamoro were also targets of electoral fraud. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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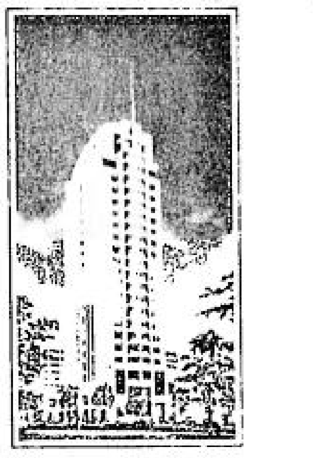

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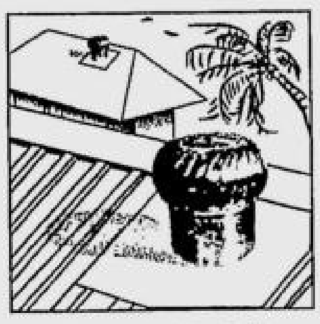

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Pacquiao opponent salvages draw

From page A1

too, had been robbed.

Both fighters said they would like to do it again and promoters readily announced a rematch would be worked out.

Marquez looked like a goner after being speared down to the floor by big left straights three times in the first round, the last sending him flat on his back, before he slowly got back on his feet to barely beat the count.

But try hard as he did to nail down the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight champion, Pacquiao failed to deliver his bread-and-butter combinations after his left hand ached and swelled in the second round.

He also bared a badly blistered right toe which he said he had to favor, thereby causing cramps in the other leg starting the sixth.

Of course, there was no need to use the injuries as alibis because Pacquiao clearly won despite them, said Pacquiao's American promoter Murad Muhammad.

"He should be very proud of himself, his countrymen should be very proud of what Pacquiao did here today," said Murad.

He said HBO people who scored the fight had Pacquiao the winner.

Score cards

Judge John Stewart of New Jersey gave the bout to Pacquiao, 115-110; Canada's Guy Gutras picked Marquez, 115-110; while Burt Clements of Nevada scored it a draw, 113-all.

The INQUIRER scored it 115-113 for Pacquiao.

Marquez showed the stuff champions are made of as he refused to wilt after the disastrous first round and instead tried to turn the fight with a combination of craftsmanship and gallantry starting the third.

Pacquiao suffered a cut over the right eye caused by a stiff left in the fifth, but he stood his ground and engaged Marquez in several furious exchanges to the delight of the big crowd of Filipinos and Mexicans at the Grand Arena of the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino.

Relieved Mexican fans erupted in glee when, after a long suspense, Michael Buffer announced a split draw.

Many of the Filipinos who came in full force from various American states could only shake their heads in disbelief.

DOWN goes Marquez in the first round as the referee signals Pacquiao to go to a neutral corner. AP

Pacquiao did appear headed for a big stoppage after a blazing start, but he allowed Marquez to come back as he visibly became careless, too excited in chasing for a knockout.

Manila rematch?

The draw meant Pacquiao's projected match against world super featherweight champion Erik Morales in July is off. Promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank announced Carlos Hernandez of the Dominican Republic will instead be fighting Morales.

There were reports of business manager Rod Nazario offering to bring Pacquiao-Marquez Part II to Manila.

Trainer Freddie Roach said Pacquiao failed to give his 100 percent due to the injuries and his over-eagerness to score a knockout.

"But he definitely did enough to win the fight," said Roach, who molded Pacquiao from a slambang fighter into a classy, crafty world champ.

The fight computer box showed Marquez connected a total of 158 punches to Pacquiao's 148. Pacquiao registered more jabs with 48 to Marquez's 36, but the Mexican landed more power punches, 122 against 100 by Pacquiao.

Marquez, whose nose bled throughout the match, finished with a badly swollen face and appeared more like a loser. Pacquiao, with a wound over the right eye and bruises on his forehead and cheeks, was brought to the hospital straight from the arena.

Marquez thus retained his IBF and WBA titles; in the same way, Pacquiao could continue laying claim to being the People's Featherweight Champion.

There were reports Pacquiao's left hand, injured in the breathtaking first-round salvo, would be put in a cast.

It could not be immediately determined what caused the big, bothersome blisters on the right toe which, Pacquiao said, ruined his foundation and balance.

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Fraudulent polls . . .

From page A1

a 1.7-point gain from her 35.3 percent in the previous survey (April 10-17), Ms Macapagal consolidated her upward curve that started in February. On the other hand, Poe's rating showed the exhaustion of his campaign. It has remained flat, hovering within the 30-32 point band after peaking in February at 37.5 percent.

Ms Macapagal has peaked at the right time and has now tightened her grip as the front-runner, while Poe and the rest of the presidential candidates were swimming against the Macapagal tide, giving her the momentum.

The last SWS survey, conducted on May 1-4, caught the voters' mood after the Iglesia ni Cristo endorsed Ms Macapagal on May 2. The endorsement of El Shaddai followed. The voting blocs that can be mobilized by INC and El Shaddai are pivotal elements in this election, on the eve of which there remains a significant number of undecided voters—24 percent of the 43 million registered voters.

Unless something dramatic breaks out today, the undecided voters are not likely to go en masse for Poe. He and Ms Macapagal are struggling to mop up the undecided votes. In the mopping-up operations, however, the Macapagal administration has the edge because it has the extensive political machinery deployed to cover all the electoral districts.

No sign

If the final opposition rallies on Friday and Saturday were any indication, there was no sign that they had sparked a mass migration that would allow Poe to regain the momentum at the 11th hour. In reality, the opposition's final rally in the heart of Makati City did not draw a large crowd, much smaller than that of evangelist Eddie Villanueva at the Luneta.

The opposition's "*miting de avance*" had no spark of enthusiasm and was listless. Evidence of confidence was lacking. The crowd appeared to have been sprayed with sleeping gas. Poe was wooden like a zombie. He raised no new issue that could have caught fire to reignite his waning campaign. He mauled to death the corruption issue, already exhausted in the campaign.

When he asserted that he had captured the mood for change and he would lead the change, Poe failed to clarify where he would lead the country to and what change the people could expect from him. He has never presented a concrete platform during the campaign. The *miting de avance* gave no clue of a dramatic shift of voters back to Poe.

With the almost universal concern over the credibility of the election, the responsibility to ensure a fair election falls squarely on the administration. It has the resources and power to conduct a fair election. The opposition has no capability to commit wholesale fraud.

Since there is now a national focus on the conduct of election, and the President is ahead in the polls and is enjoying the initiative, there is an environment that helps ensure a fair election. If the administration had planned to cheat, such a plan was probable in February and March when Ms Macapagal and Poe were tied in the surveys and the election appeared to be neck-and-neck.

No need to cheat

But with the widening of the gap between Ms Macapagal and Poe, prospects of the President's victory are now brighter than they were three months ago. These render absolutely unnecessary any cheating. Ms Macapagal can win comfortably without cheating.

She should never, never cheat. At the same time, she also should not allow the opposition to cheat. If the election is tainted by wholesale fraud, Ms Macapagal is courting a political catastrophe not seen in this country since it practiced a two-party democratic system more than 50 years ago.

A government elected in a balloting marred by widespread irregularities would not only be unable to rule effectively. Mass fraud could spark immediately a political conflagration that can unleash all the dreaded political ills of an unstable democracy, including the much-feared scenario of a military takeover on the ruins of a failed and fraudulent election.

This specter of civil chaos springing from an election whose credibility is undermined by mass fraud is what gives a nightmare to the nonpartisan, civil society groups who are warning sternly that the integrity of this election is crucially important.

Credibility of polls

The most important issue of this election is not who wins the presidency but the credibility of the election. Credibility is the key to the political legitimacy of the next government. Legitimacy is the foundation of political stability of a democracy that has since 1986 been shaken by waves of irregular methods of political change.

May 10 is an occasion and an opportunity to normalize politics and return it to the electoral method of effecting political change. From 1986, we have had two extra-electoral methods of changing presidents—Edsa I that deposed Ferdinand Marcos and Edsa II that ousted Joseph Estrada. The 1992 and 1998 elections returned the country to the normal electoral process for political change.

After Edsa II, we are offered a golden moment to normalize politics to the electoral channel. Ms Macapagal need not be reminded about the legitimacy problems that has plagued her administration after taking power through extra-electoral means.

Stable democracy

This election tests one important issue—whether we can conduct an honest election as a basis for a legitimate and stable democracy. The penalties of cheating are horrendous to contemplate. It is, therefore, in the interest of the administration to ensure a clean election.

Many things can flow from a clean election that gives legitimacy to the next administration. From legitimacy, initiatives for economic revival, an effective government, national unity and consensus and long-term political stability can flow.

These are the stakes involved in the May 10 elections. They have a bearing on the failure and success of Philippine democracy, already tottering on fragile foundations.

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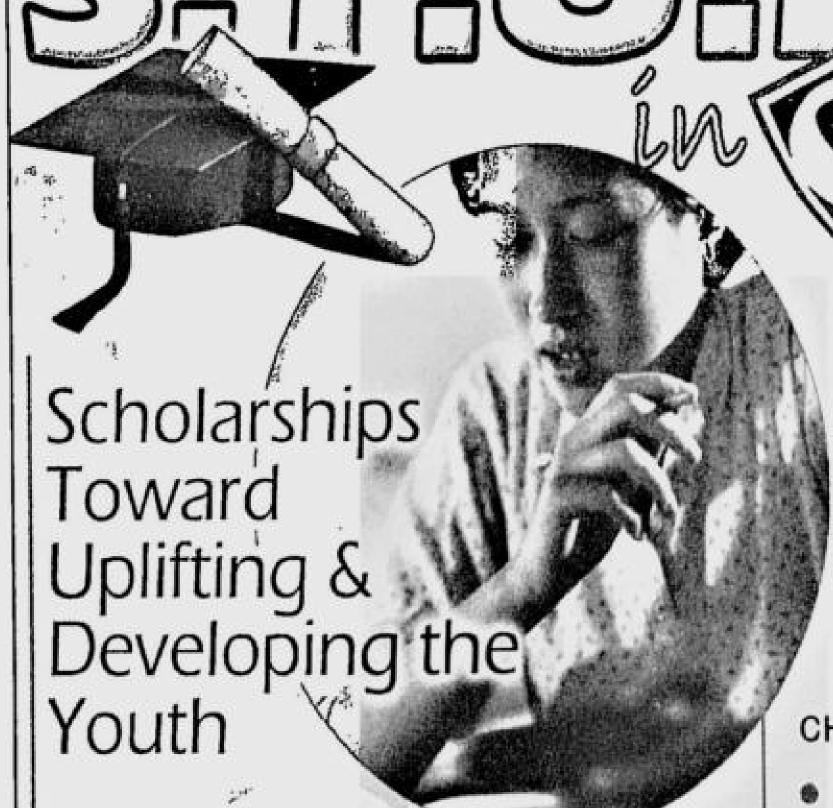

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GMA, foes unite in prayer

THE PRESIDENTIAL candidates forget the bitterness of the campaign during Mass at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila.
VAL HANDUMON

From page A1

op Gaudencio Rosales and former President Corazon Aquino, who composed the "Presidential Candidates' Prayer" herself. Both joined the candidates at the altar.

It was the first time that President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, actor Fernando Poe Jr., ex-Sen. Raul Roco and preacher Eddie Villanueva appeared at a gathering together.

"It's good for people to see all the five candidates praying together," Aquino said.

Wearing their Sunday best, the rivals meekly followed the seating arrangement imposed by Church and government protocol officials.

Separate pews

The candidates were seated alphabetically: the President at the left facing the altar, followed by Lacson, Poe, Roco and Villanueva. Before the candidates arrived, protocol officials changed the long pew that the candidates would have shared together with five separate pews that gave them some space.

Roco, who was in a yellow shirt with floral prints, was the first to go inside the church, followed by Poe, Lacson, Ms Macapagal and Villanueva. The President reportedly watched the Manny Pacquiao-Manuel Marquez boxing match before going to Mass.

Poe, wearing a *barong*, and Roco chatted for some time before Lacson arrived and the three of them shook hands.

When Ms Macapagal arrived, she smiled and shook hands with Lacson, who had accused her and her husband of keeping secret Jose Pidal accounts, as well as with Poe, who was her chief rival as indicated by the surveys. Only the previous night during his *miting de avance*, Poe had called Ms Macapagal a liar and a thief.

Roco, who had refused to withdraw in Ms Macapagal's favor, made an effort to buss Ms Macapagal on the cheek as Lacson and Poe, who were between them, looked on. The President hardly paid attention to Villanueva.

Ms Macapagal wore a rust-colored pantsuit while Lacson and Villanueva also wore *barongs*.

Before the Mass, Ms Macapagal's aides were asking why she was seated beside Lacson. A male aide wondered what would happen during the part where they would greet each other "peace."

Greeting of peace

At the moment of truth, Lacson turned immediately to the President to offer her peace and she obliged with a smile and a handshake.

Ms Macapagal immediately turned and walked to the other side of the church to greet Aquino, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., and Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

When Ms Macapagal returned to her seat, Roco offered peace and they shook hands. She had to shake hands with Poe as well, but she did not bother to do so with Villanueva, who had mustered the biggest crowds in this election season at his proclamation rally and *miting de avance* at the Rizal Park in Manila.

Just before communion when the candidates were all kneeling, Ms Macapagal was the last to rise as she prayed silently. She and Roco received communion.

The candidates' spouses were seated behind them. But only Poe's wife Susan, Roco's wife Sonia and Mrs. Villanueva showed up. Lacson was accompanied by his son Jeric and Ms Macapagal was accompanied by an aide. First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was nowhere in sight.

Loren and Hermie

Vice presidential candidates Sen. Loren Legarda and Herminio Aquino showed up and were acknowledged by Aquino in her speech. Ms Macapagal's running mate Sen. Noli de Castro did not come.

In his homily, Rosales, who celebrated the Mass with six other priests, reminded the candidates that the election was a "democratic practice that must be kept free, honest and peaceful."

"(Today's) election is just as important as the day after tomorrow and the months and years after. Our countrymen need unity in order to make progress. Refuse the use of violence even in correcting what is wrong, because there is already a just and legal way of addressing even a crime," he said.

"For no less than three generations this country has been chancing for a likelihood of a compassionately attuned national and local leadership. Today, we are as divided in many more ways as 58 years ago," said Rosales, who has warned of possible cheating in the counting of votes.

"Our recent history reminds us of the tragic mistakes committed and the crises imposed on us by our errors in the past. Martial law and the disvalues it had created. Half a dozen coup attempts. Low-level campaigns. Group-interest politics. Dirty elections and rampant practice of graft and corruption," Rosales said.

He said all these mistakes weakened the Filipinos' sense of national unity and direction.

Sacrifice

Rosales told the candidates that nation-building was more important than an election and called on them to sacrifice ambition for unity of the country.

"Thus, even the threat of or the actual use of violence must be bared for what it is—a veil to cover up an insatiable appetite for power. Another threat to democracy is when the citizenry loses interest to defend it from dishonesty, adventurism and corruption," he said.

"We want a peaceful election because the people clamor for peace. We want an honest election because our people, by and large, are honest people," he said.

Saying 63 percent of the people were poor, Rosales pointed out that the "marginalized were made poorer by every election."

He said that if he were to speak for the poor, his message to the candidates would be: "Spare the poor from more suffering.'"

"In any destabilization it is the poorest who suffer most. There is now no more room for another planned violence. There is no more time for personal ambition. Let us no longer postpone, for any reason, our national recovery and development," he said.

True leadership

Rosales thanked and congratulated the five candidates for offering themselves to the country and for the "recently concluded electoral campaign that ended without rancor for everyone."

"True leadership begins with the sacrifice of one's comfort and ambition," he said. "Your reward will be to see the Philippines rise with a united people. Only one will, in fact, lead; but in the sacrifice and discipline you have shown, all of you are leaders our country can be proud of," he said.

Aquino also thanked the candidates for honoring her invitation to attend the Mass.

She urged the Filipinos to pray for the country's military, police and election officials that they would ensure a credible and peaceful election.

"Finally let us pray for one another so that we will do what is right and what is just, may God our Father bless our country and have mercy on all of us," she said at the end of the Mass.

Gen. Narciso Abaya, Armed Forces chief of staff, and Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Philippine National Police chief, attended the Mass and offered the candle during the offertory. They were in civilian clothes.

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GMA, foes unite in prayer

From page A1

op Gaudencio Rosales and former President Corazon Aquino, who composed the "Presidential Candidates' Prayer" herself. Both joined the candidates at the altar.

It was the first time that President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, actor Fernando Poe Jr., ex-Sen. Raul Roco and preacher Eddie Villanueva appeared at a gathering together.

"It's good for people to see all the five candidates praying together," Aquino said.

Wearing their Sunday best, the rivals meekly followed the seating arrangement imposed by Church and government protocol officials.

Separate pews

The candidates were seated alphabetically: the President at the left facing the altar, followed by Lacson, Poe, Roco and Villanueva. Before the candidates arrived, protocol officials changed the long pew that the candidates would have shared together with five separate pews that gave them some space.

Roco, who was in a yellow shirt with floral prints, was the first to go inside the church, followed by Poe, Lacson, Ms Macapagal and Villanueva. The President reportedly watched the Manny Pacquiao-Manuel Marquez boxing match before going to Mass.

Poe, wearing a *barong*, and Roco chatted for some time before Lacson arrived and the three of them shook hands.

When Ms Macapagal arrived, she smiled and shook hands with Lacson, who had accused her and her husband of keeping secret Jose Pidal accounts, as well with Poe, who was her chief rival as indicated by the surveys. Only the previous night during his *miting de avance*, Poe had called Ms Macapagal a liar and a thief.

Roco, who had refused to withdraw in Ms Macapagal's favo[illegible] made an effort to buss Ms Macapagal on the cheek as Lacson and Poe, who were between them, looked on. The President hardly paid attention to Villanueva.

Ms Macapagal wore a rust-colored pantsuit while Lacson and Villanueva also wore *barongs*.

Before the Mass, Ms Macapagal's aides were asking why she was seated beside Lacson. A male aide wondered what would happen during the part where they would greet each other "peace."

Greeting of peace

At the moment of truth, Lacson turned immediately to the President to offer her peace and she obliged with a smile and a handshake.

Ms Macapagal immediately turned and walked to the other side of the church to greet Aquino, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., and Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

When Ms Macapagal returned to her seat, Roco offered peace and they shook hands. She had to shake hands with Poe as well, but she did not bother to do so with Villanueva, who had mustered the biggest crowds in this election season at his proclamation rally and *miting de avance* at the Rizal Park in Manila.

Just before communion when the candidates were all kneeling Ms Macapagal was the last to rise as she prayed silently. She and Roco received communion.

The candidates' spouses were seated behind them. But only Poe's wife Susan, Roco's wife Sonia and Mrs Villanueva showed up. Lacson was accompanied by his son Jeric and Ms Macapagal was accompanied by an aide. First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was nowhere in sight.

Loren and Hermie

Vice presidential candidates Sen. Loren Legarda and Herminio Aquino showed up and were acknowledged by Aquino in her speech. Ms Macapagal's running mate Sen Noli de Castro did not come.

In his homily, Rosales, who celebrated the Mass with six other priests, reminded the candidates that the election was a "democratic practice that must be kept free, honest and peaceful."

"(Today's) election is just as important as the day after tomorrow and the months and years after. Our countrymen need unity in order to make progress. Refuse the use of violence even in correcting what is wrong, because there is already a just and legal way of addressing even a crime," he said.

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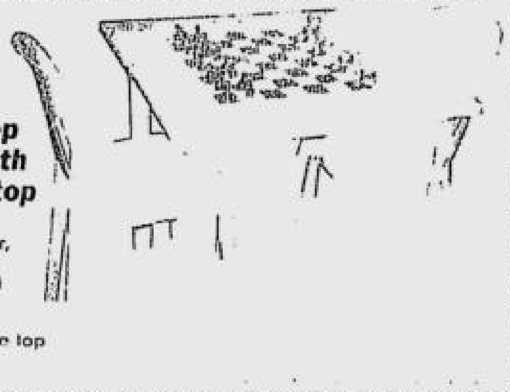

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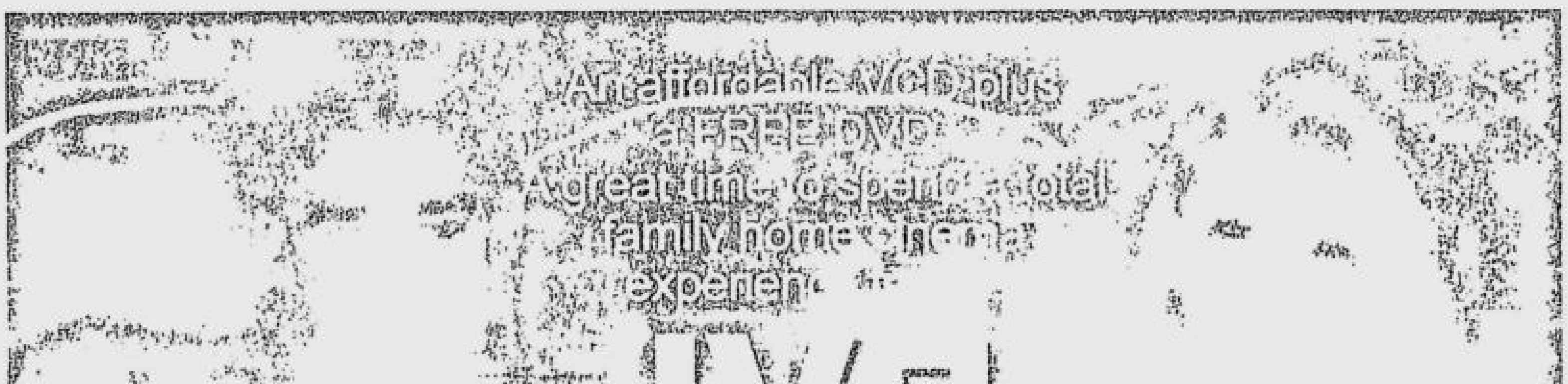

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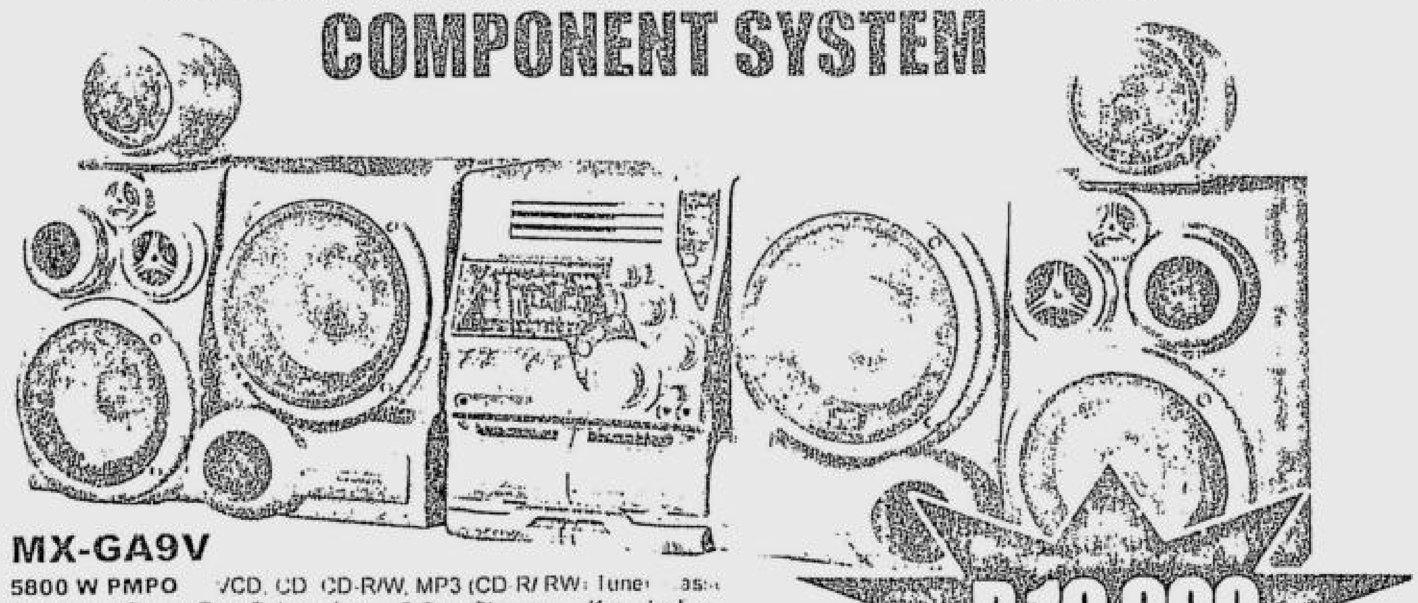

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Killings continue; Comelec sees 80-85% turnout

From page A1

"Despite the incidents that we tallied, the pre-election phase was generally peaceful," Director Avelino Razon, PNP operations director, told the Inquirer.

PNP records showed that this year's election campaign has been the most peaceful since 1995. A total of 269 election-related violent incidents that left 111 people dead and 293 wounded were recorded in 2001. A total of 267 election-related violent incidents were recorded in 1998, and 121 in 1995.

Razon said the PNP was expecting general peace to reign until the last ballot was counted. "There will, of course, be pocket violence, but we don't think there'll be widespread violence."

Cheating

While it declared readiness to usher 43.5 million voters into the polling precincts, the Comelec yesterday admitted that it was facing "some problems" and asked the public to be "ever vigilant" amid reports of possible cheating.

Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said the poll body had encountered some logistical problems in the field after the election paraphernalia were shipped out.

Some election returns for Pangasinan, Negros and parts of Mindanao had missing pages while some precincts still did not have complete sets of ballots as of noon yesterday.

"We have to admit that there are some problems really ... But the city officers immediately act on these and dispatch the required documents to complete what had been reported as inadequate, so things are moving," Borra told reporters at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila, where he attended the Unity Mass with all the presidential candidates.

At least 55,000 candidates are vying for 17,676 national and local posts in what many poll watchdog groups consider one of the most controversial elections in the country's history.

"There will be some peace and order problems, but by and large, it is based on feedback that we have gathered that this will be a relatively peaceful elections," Borra said when asked if he expected violence during the elections.

Jose Concepcion, National Movement for Free Elections chair, said this year's elections "would not be as bad as during the time of (deposed President Joseph) Estrada."

He said that with the Namfrel getting the sixth copy of the election returns and the two major political parties getting their own copies of the returns, the results could be easily verified.

Concepcion urged the political parties to do their own count so that when the official Comelec count was out, they would have something to refer to.

Supplies

The Comelec has created an ad hoc committee composed of members of the printing, allocation and reception committees to handle inquiries on forms and supplies from the precincts. Borra assured that even if the Comelec had hired forwarders to deliver the supplies, Comelec personnel would still be accompanying the forwarders "up to the last destination."

He appealed to the political parties not to cheat, stressing that vote-padding and vote-shaving did not represent the genuine mandate of the people.

A coalition led by the country's bishops had revealed an alleged plan for "massive, systematic and intense" electoral fraud for which administration and opposition parties were blaming each other.

The five presidential candidates attended the Unity Mass officiated by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales and said a prayer of commitment to accept the results of the elections, whether it favored them or not.

"It is true that we have a common prayer for peace. We know that peace ... is a starting point of love, and when there is love, there will not be a violent electoral exercise so let the sovereign Filipinos wield their power through the ballots," Borra said.

Former bodyguard

On the eve of the elections, a former security aide of a congressman and a supporter of a mayoral candidate were killed in separate incidents in Antique and Capiz.

Samuel Paulino, a former bodyguard of reelectionist Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier (Lakas-CMD), was shot dead by unidentified armed men in the hinterland village of Panyatan in Laua-an town, 67 km north of the capital town of San Jose in Antique.

This was the second election-related fatality in four days in Laua-an, one of the six election areas of concern in the province.

Paulino was riding on a motorcycle with Dennis Vidallo when the attackers fired at them, the provincial police said. The two jumped from the motorcycle and ran in separate directions but the suspects caught up with Paulino and shot him to death.

Paulino was a leader of Javier's party mate, Laua-an Councilor Gabriel Magsuyan, who is running for mayor against Aser Baladjay (Liberal Party).

Supt. Ronilo Quebrar, Antique police director, said he would send more policemen in Laua-an to prevent more violence.

In Capiz, former village chief Jimmy Barnezo was shot dead in Barangay Roxas Otso in Tapaz town allegedly by Rizal Sur village chief Nestor Bluma and three members of the village council.

The victim, a supporter of mayoral candidate Jose Gloria (Aksyon Demokratiko), was on his way to the neighboring village of Rizal Sur when the suspects shot him.

Citing a report of the Tapaz police, Senior Supt. Norlito Bautista, Capiz police director, said the killing was not election-related as it was prompted by an old grudge between Barnezo and Bluma. But Gloria said Barnezo might have been killed because he was actively campaigning for him.

Cabugao town

In Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, two leaders of gubernatorial candidate Efren Rafanan were gunned down in Barangay Alinaay.

Barangay *kagawad* Roger Aganad and his brother, Fredolyn, were shot by two men in front of their house at 10 p.m. on Saturday, police said.

Rafanan, who is running against former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, said the victims' relatives and friends identified one of the gunmen as Merlito Singco.

Because of the killings, Rafanan asked the Comelec to put Ilocos Sur under its control for today's elections. Cabugao was earlier declared an election hot spot.

Senior Supt. Mario Subagan, Ilocos Sur police director, said initial investigation showed that the Aganad brothers were drunk and were killed during a fight with the suspects.

In Bantay town, a brother of a critic of Singson was wounded after he was shot on Sunday morning. Robert Segismundo, elder brother of Singson critic Nestor Segismundo, suffered from a bullet wound in the back after he was shot by unidentified men in Barangay Bukig, Bantay, at about 1 a.m. Sunday.

Nestor Segismundo is a founder of the Save Ilocos Sur Alliance, which filed a string of graft cases against Singson and other Ilocos Sur officials. Segismundo is running for board member under Rafanan's ticket.

Cagayan

In Cagayan, two supporters of Iguig mayoral candidate Wilson Sedano were killed after they were shot by supporters of reelectionist Mayor Ferdinand Trinidad.

Police identified the fatalities as Ferdinand Abana and Loreto Suniga.

Sedano and his supporters went to Barangay Minanga to campaign on Saturday but their van was blocked by two vehicles carrying Trinidad and his aides and supporters, reports said.

Trinidad's two police escorts approached Sedano's van and asked his aides if they had permits to carry guns. Sedano's group, on the other hand, questioned Trinidad's group why they were using a municipal government vehicle in their campaign.

The reports said the shooting started after Sedano asked his son, James, to record on video the government vehicle used by Trinidad's group.

Strafing

In Oras, Eastern Samar, two unidentified armed men fired at the house of a village chief and an avid supporter of one of the town's two mayoral candidates, former Mayor Teodolo Coquilla.

Benito Codico, the barangay chair of Sabang, was not hurt but he blamed the attack on Coquilla's political opponent. Coquilla is running against another former mayor of the town, Neil Alvarez.

Oras is one of the two towns in Eastern Samar police declared an area of concern. The other is Guiuan.

A total of 120 towns and cities are now under the control of the Comelec because of election-related violence. Also on the list are the entire provinces of Cavite, Masbate, Basilan and Sulu.

Both the police and military have been placed on red alert to guard against the possible outbreak of political violence in at least 49 election "hot spots" and 564 "election areas of concern."

"We will neutralize any possible attempt by any group to intimidate the electorate and influence the results of the elections," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer. ***With reports from Nelson Forte Flores and Christian V. Esguerra in Manila; Frank Cimatu, Leoncio Balbin Jr. and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Cyrain Cabueñas, PDI Visayas Bureau***

For P1,000 fee, teachers ...

From page A1

Elsewhere, teachers at the Taguig National High School had a foretaste of horror: two hand grenades—both turned out to be duds—were lobbed at their precincts.

Another group of teachers at he Sauyo High School in Quezon City was virtually detained in a lassroom for 12 hours by a partian mob.

For a P1,000 daily fee, some 75,000 public schoolteachers nationwide are serving in today's lections and for the next couple of days, they will be facing the ame aggravation, thanks to the ommission on Elections' otched computerization plans.

Teachers painfully familiar with the tedious, manual counting system could only make this ppeal to the voting public: Please be cooperative, keep your ool—and make our jobs easier.

And if you should smell fraud, on't look at us because massive heating is not known to occur at ne precinct level.

Missing names

For starters, voters can make it less taxing day for teachers if hey would go to the polling centers early, rather than stand in ong queues in the final minutes efore the 3 p.m. deadline, said rance Castro, ACT treasurer and resident of the Quezon City Public School Teachers Association.

A veteran of three elections, Castro said another common source of frustration for the teachers were voters who hounded them when they could not find their names on the lists posted outside the precincts.

"They think we're supposed to know everything," said Castro, a teacher at the Quirino High School. "So we get the blame even though it's the Comelec [that prepared the list]."

Castro foresees even more confusion at the precincts today. This is because the certified voters list (CVLs) are no longer alphabetized, unlike in previous polls in which family members sharing the same surnames normally vote in the same precinct.

Under the newly introduced precinct-mapping system, the CVLs are drawn up according to the neighborhood "clusters" where the voters reside.

Intimidating watchers

Poll watchers representing political parties can be intimidating, too, particularly during the counting of votes, Castro said.

"They try to rush us so that they can immediately get their copies of the tally sheets and collect their per diem [from their parties]," said Castro, who remembers collapsing from exhaustion when she served in the 1998 polls.

In her experience, she said, poll watchers repeatedly "interrupted" the proceedings, causing teachers to overlook some of the tally sheets they were supposed to sign at the end of the tabulation period.

Castro said teachers definitely welcomed a public advisory issued by the poll watchdogs, the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, urging voters to fill up ballots "alphabetically."

According to Namfrel and the PPCRV, since the Comelec-issued tally sheets and certificates of canvass have the candidates' names in alphabetical order, the tabulating officials will no longer take extra seconds scanning the list back and forth if ballot entries are read out to them in a similar, predictable sequence.

Suffocating classrooms

On top of dealing with restive crowds, teachers also have to cope with poorly illuminated and "suffocating" classrooms-turned-precincts, Castro said.

Sometimes, one classroom even gets divided into four precincts. The result is that by tabulation time, there's "not enough wall" to hold all the tally sheets, said Castro.

Bes Rivera, 27, of the Manila Science High School, said her first election service in 2001 was not even in a classroom but in "makeshift precincts, in tents."

Quiapo fortune tellers can't ...

From page A1

Tenefrancia said the question of who's going to win has already been settled in his tarot cards.

"It's FPJ," he said, pointing to stars in two cards that he picked out from a deck. He was referring to Fernando Poe Jr., the opposition front-runner and film star idolized by many Filipinos.

But Maria Lourdes Santillan, a 65-year-old seer known as Grandmother Ina, predicted that incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo would emerge triumphant.

Another fortune teller beside her, known only as Sister Meann, shuffled her cards and saw trouble looming because an unnamed male candidate would be cheated of his victory.

If any of the presidential candidates are interested, the three seers hold court on the humid, umbrella-covered sidewalk outside the centuries-old Quiapo church.

Regardless of who wins the elections, the polls have been a boon for many, including Fatima de la Cruz, one of a dozen poor women in Quiapo church with an odd profession: They pray, in exchange for cash donations or gifts, for the yearnings of other people too busy for a long stay in the church. Lately, politicians have become clients.

Lacson's 8

"They ask me to pray for their safety and that they would not be cheated," De la Cruz said, clutching a rosary with large wooden beads inside the church.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson's faith in feng shui and numerology is stronger than his belief in the supposed science of pre-election surveys.

In fact, Lacson insists he has the numbers. The number 8 in particular, said to be his lucky numeral.

Lacson was on the campaign trail for 88 days. His last sorties were in Region 8 (Eastern Visayas). The last place he visited was Tacloban (City), which has 8 letters. His website is at www.888.ph. He will cast his vote today in his hometown of Imus in Cavite at 8 a.m. At one time, he asked his supporters to bring eight-by-eight clubs to guard the votes against possible cheating in the precincts.

His love for the number 8, however, doesn't carry over to his choice for the number of votes. The magic numbers for him are 10 million and three million.

"If I get less than three million votes, you won't see me in the Senate again. But if I get 10 million or more votes, you won't see me in the Senate again either, but that's because we'll see each other in Malacañang," he told members of media on Saturday during a thanksgiving dinner at the Century Park Sheraton.

The three-million figure is a challenge to Pulse Asia and the Social Weather Stations, polling firms that said he would only get 10 percent of the votes for president. Lacson's strategists believe that 10 percent of actual voters is roughly just three million, although there are more than 40 million registered voters.

Lacson got 10.5 million votes when he ran for the Senate in 2001. He believes he can win the five-way race if he could muster the same number of votes.

Chinoy support

The senator believes that the reception he received from the electorate when he ran for the Senate three years ago pales in comparison to the overwhelming response to his presidential bid this time around.

Lacson's belief in numerology and geomancy—clearly an influence of his Chinese-Filipino friends—also seemed to serve him in good stead. Funds continued to pour in even on the last day of the campaign.

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The hour-and-a-half postponement of the dinner caused mild speculation that he was indeed meeting with the actor. *With an AP report*

El Shaddai shepherd blesses Gloria, Loren

rom page A1

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Endorsements from El Shaddai, with members estimated to number 7 million, and from the religious sect Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) are seen by many analysts as crucial to victory in the elections.

Ms Macapagal earlier clinched the support of INC, which is said to have a voting power of at least one million.

El Shaddai's voting strength has been put at 1.5 to 2 million. It backed Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada in the 1992 and 1998 elections. The two candidates won.

As late as yesterday, the Poe camp seemed to hang on to the hope that the movie actor would get Velarde's blessings.

In a press statement, the FPJ Group quoted El Shaddai spiritual adviser Bishop Teodoro Bacani as saying the religious group was not endorsing any presidential candidate.

El Shaddai spokesperson Mel Robles shot down the statement, saying the Shepherd's blessing given by Velarde to the President last week stood as the group's endorsement of her.

"In the absence of a formal endorsement, we can safely conclude that the Shepherd's blessing was the endorsement," Robles told the Inquirer on the phone.

Legarda arrived at the El Shaddai rally at about 1:30 a.m. yesterday.

Her principal rival, Sen. Noli de Castro, was at the vigil himself on Saturday evening but left at midnight, apparently conceding that he was not going to be the flock's choice.

Rating drop

El Shaddai's anointment of Legarda as its vice presidential choice could be a major blow to De Castro.

A former ABS-CBN broadcaster like Legarda, De Castro had led Legarda by nearly 30 percentage points in major surveys since the campaign began in February. Last week, his lead plummeted to about four points, putting the two rivals on a virtual statistical dead heat.

The plunge in De Castro's ratings coincided with a barrage of negative publicity, including allegations by his former wife—which De Castro vehemently denied—that he had, at some point, abandoned their daughter.

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Looking girlish in her jeans, Legarda gamely joined the singing and dancing of the El Shaddai faithful.

During his two-and-a-half hour talk, Velarde made passing reference to reports that he was backing the candidacy of Ms Macapagal.

"Several have called me regarding these reports. Some were angry. Some were curious," he said.

Velarde did not deny or confirm the reports. "I don't expect everybody to agree with me," he only said.

Sample ballots

Sample ballots distributed during the vigil had the space for president blank, triggering speculation that Velarde had not made up his mind.

But Robles denied that El Shaddai had distributed sample ballots to its flock.

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Buhay is El Shaddai's party-list group and Velarde's son, Rene, is among its nominees.

Robles also maintained that, while El Shaddai "does not openly endorse" candidates, the recognition given to Legarda during the overnight prayer vigil was "acknowledged" by the group's members.

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Accompanied by his ailing wife Cecille, senatorial candidate Heherson Alvarez was the only senatorial candidate who was on the stage during the Velarde show.

Killings continue; Comelec sees 80-85% turnout

From page A1

"Despite the incidents that we tallied, the pre-election phase was generally peaceful," Director Avelino Razon, PNP operations director, told the INQUIRER.

PNP records showed that this year's election campaign has been the most peaceful since 1995. A total of 269 election-related violent incidents that left 111 people dead and 293 wounded were recorded in 2001. A total of 267 election-related violent incidents were recorded in 1998, and 121 in 1995.

Razon said the PNP was expecting general peace to reign until the last ballot was counted. "There will, of course, be pocket violence, but we don't think there'll be widespread violence."

Cheating

While it declared readiness to usher 43.5 million voters into the polling precincts, the Comelec yesterday admitted that it was facing "some problems" and asked the public to be "ever vigilant" amid reports of possible cheating.

Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said the poll body had encountered some logistical prob ems in the field after the election paraphernalia were shipped out.

Some election returns for Pangasinan, Negros and parts of Mindanao had missing pages while some precincts still did not have complete sets of ballots as of noon yesterday.

"We have to admit that there are some problems really ... But the city officers immediately act on these and dispatch the required documents to complete what had been reported as inadequate, so things are moving," Borra told reporters at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila, where he attended the Unity Mass with all the presidential candidates.

At least 55,000 candidates are vying for 17,676 national and local posts in what many poll watchdog groups consider one of the most controversial elections in the country's history.

"There will be some peace and order problems, but by and large, it is based on feedback that we have gathered that this will be a relatively peaceful elections," Borra said when asked if he expected violence during the elections.

Jose Concepcion, National Movement for Free Elections chair, said this year's elections "would not be as bad as during the time of (deposed President Joseph) Estrada."

He said that with the Namfrel getting the sixth copy of the election returns and the two major political parties getting their own copies of the returns, the results could be easily verified.

Concepcion urged the political parties to do their own count so that when the official Comelec count was out, they would have something to refer to.

Supplies

The Comelec has created an ad hoc committee composed of members of the printing, allocation and reception committees to handle inquiries on forms and supplies from the precincts. Borra assured that even if the Comelec had hired forwarders to deliver the supplies, Comelec personnel would still be accompanying the forwarders "up to the last destination."

He appealed to the political parties not to cheat, stressing that vote-padding and vote-shaving did not represent the genuine mandate of the people.

A coalition led by the country's bishops had revealed an alleged plan for "massive, systematic and intense" electoral fraud for which administration and opposition parties were blaming each other.

The five presidential candidates attended the Unity Mass officiated by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales and said a prayer of commitment to accept the results of the elections, whether it favored them or not.

"It is true that we have a common prayer for peace. We know that peace ... is a starting point of love, and when there is love, there will not be a violent electoral exercise so let the sovereign Filipinos wield their power through the ballots," Borra said.

Former bodyguard

On the eve of the elections, a former security aide of a congressman and a supporter of a mayoral candidate were killed in separate incidents in Antique and Capiz.

Samuel Paulino, a former bodyguard of reelectionist Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier (Lakas-CMD), was shot dead by unidentified armed men in the hinterland village of Panyatan in Laua-an town, 67 km north of the capital town of San Jose in Antique.

This was the second election-related fatality in four days in Laua-an, one of the six election areas of concern in the province.

Paulino was riding on a motorcycle with Dennis Vidallo when the attackers fired at them, the provincial police said. The two jumped from the motorcycle and ran in separate directions but the suspects caught up with Paulino and shot him to death.

Paulino was a leader of Javier's party mate, Laua-an Councilor Gabriel Magsuyan, who is running for mayor against Aser Baladjay (Liberal Party).

Supt. Ronilo Quebrar, Antique police director, said he would send more policemen in Laua-an to prevent more violence.

In Capiz, former village chief Jimmy Barnezo was shot dead in Barangay Roxas Otso in Tapaz town allegedly by Rizal Sur village chief Nestor Bluma and three members of the village council.

The victim, a supporter of mayoral candidate Jose Gloria (Aksyon Demokratiko), was on his way to the neighboring village of Rizal Sur when the suspects shot him.

Citing a report of the Tapaz police, Senior Supt. Norlito Bautista, Capiz police director, said the killing was not election-related as it was prompted by an old grudge between Barnezo and Bluma. But Gloria said Barnezo might have been killed because he was actively campaigning for him.

Cabugao town

In Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, two leaders of gubernatorial candidate Efren Rafanan were gunned down in Barangay Alinaay.

Barangay *kagawad* Roger Aganad and his brother, Fredolyn, were shot by two men in front of their house at 10 p.m. on Saturday, police said.

Rafanan, who is running against former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, said the victims' relatives and friends identified one of the gunmen as Merlito Singco.

Because of the killings, Rafanan asked the Comelec to put Ilocos Sur under its control for today's elections. Cabugao was earlier declared an election hot spot.

Senior Supt. Mario Subagan, Ilocos Sur police director, said initial investigation showed that the Aganad brothers were drunk and were killed during a fight with the suspects.

In Bantay town, a brother of a critic of Singson was wounded after he was shot on Sunday morning. Robert Segismundo, elder brother of Singson critic Nestor Segismundo, suffered from a bullet wound in the back after he was shot by unidentified men in Barangay Bukig, Bantay, at about 1 a.m. Sunday.

Nestor Segismundo is a founder of the Save Ilocos Sur Alliance, which filed a string of graft cases against Singson and other Ilocos Sur officials. Segismundo is running for board member under Rafanan's ticket.

Cagayan

In Cagayan, two supporters of Iguig mayoral candidate Wilson Sedano were killed after they were shot by supporters of reelectionist Mayor Ferdinand Trinidad.

Police identified the fatalities as Ferdinand Abana and Loreto Suniga.

Sedano and his supporters went to Barangay Minanga to campaign on Saturday but their van was blocked by two vehicles carrying Trinidad and his aides and supporters, reports said.

Trinidad's two police escorts approached Sedano's van and asked his aides if they had permits to carry guns. Sedano's group, on the other hand, questioned Trinidad's group why they were using a municipal government vehicle in their campaign.

The reports said the shooting started after Sedano asked his son, James, to record on video the government vehicle used by Trinidad's group.

Strafing

In Oras, Eastern Samar, two unidentified armed men fired at the house of a village chief and an avid supporter of one of the town's two mayoral candidates, former Mayor Teodolo Coquilla.

Benito Codico, the barangay chair of Sabang, was not hurt but he blamed the attack on Coquilla's political opponent. Coquilla is running against another former mayor of the town, Neil Alvarez.

Oras is one of the two towns in Eastern Samar police declared an area of concern. The other is Guiuan.

A total of 120 towns and cities are now under the control of the Comelec because of election-related violence. Also on the list are the entire provinces of Cavite, Masbate, Basilan and Sulu.

Both the police and military have been placed on red alert to guard against the possible outbreak of political violence in at least 49 election "hot spots" and 564 "election areas of concern."

"We will neutralize any possible attempt by any group to intimidate the electorate and influence the results of the elections," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer. *With reports from Nelson Forte Flores and Christian V. Esguerra in Manila; Frank Cimatu, Leoncio Balbin Jr. and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Cyrain Cabueñas, PDI Visayas Bureau*

For P1,000 fee, teachers . . .

From page A1

Elsewhere, teachers at the Taguig National High School had a foretaste of horror: two hand grenades—both turned out to be duds—were lobbed at their precincts.

Another group of teachers at he Sauyo High School in Quezon City was virtually detained in a lassroom for 12 hours by a partisan mob.

For a P1,000 daily fee, some 75,000 public schoolteachers nationwide are serving in today's lections and for the next couple of days, they will be facing the ame aggravation, thanks to the Commission on Elections' otched computerization plans.

Teachers painfully familiar with the tedious, manual count ng system could only make this ppeal to the voting public: Please be cooperative, keep your ool—and make our jobs easier.

And if you should smell fraud, on't look at us because massive heating is not known to occur at he precinct level.

Missing names

For starters, voters can make it less taxing day for teachers if they would go to the polling centers early, rather than stand in ong queues in the final minutes efore the 3 p.m. deadline, said rance Castro, ACT treasurer and resident of the Quezon City Public School Teachers Association.

A veteran of three elections, Castro said another common source of frustration for the teachers were voters who hounded them when they could not find their names on the lists posted outside the precincts.

"They think we're supposed to know everything," said Castro, a teacher at the Quirino High School. "So we get the blame even though it's the Comelec [that prepared the list]."

Castro foresees even more confusion at the precincts today. This is because the certified voters list (CVLs) are no longer alphabetized, unlike in previous polls in which family members sharing the same surnames normally vote in the same precinct.

Under the newly introduced precinct-mapping system, the CVLs are drawn up according to the neighborhood "clusters" where the voters reside.

Intimidating watchers

Poll watchers representing political parties can be intimidating, too, particularly during the counting of votes, Castro said.

"They try to rush us so that they can immediately get their copies of the tally sheets and collect their per diem [from their parties]," said Castro, who remembers collapsing from exhaustion when she served in the 1998 polls.

In her experience, she said, poll watchers repeatedly "interrupted" the proceedings, causing teachers to overlook some of the tally sheets they were supposed to sign at the end of the tabulation period.

Castro said teachers definitely welcomed a public advisory issued by the poll watchdogs, the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, urging voters to fill up ballots "alphabetically."

According to Namfrel and the PPCRV, since the Comelec-issued tally sheets and certificates of canvass have the candidates' names in alphabetical order, the tabulating officials will no longer take extra seconds scanning the list back and forth if ballot entries are read out to them in a similar, predictable sequence.

Suffocating classrooms

On top of dealing with restive crowds, teachers also have to cope with poorly illuminated and "suffocating" classrooms-turned-precincts, Castro said.

Sometimes, one classroom even gets divided into four precincts. The result is that by tabulation time, there's "not enough wall" to hold all the tally sheets, said Castro.

Bes Rivera, 27, of the Manila Science High School, said her first election service in 2001 was not even in a classroom but in "makeshift precincts, in tents."

Quiapo fortune tellers can't . . .

From page A1

Tenefrancia said the question of who's going to win has already been settled in his tarot cards.

"It's FPJ," he said, pointing to stars in two cards that he picked out from a deck. He was referring to Fernando Poe Jr., the opposition front-runner and film star idolized by many Filipinos.

But Maria Lourdes Santillan, a 65-year-old seer known as Grandmother Ina, predicted that incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo would emerge triumphant.

Another fortune teller beside her, known only as Sister Meann, shuffled her cards and saw trouble looming because an unnamed male candidate would be cheated of his victory.

If any of the presidential candidates are interested, the three seers hold court on the humid, umbrella-covered sidewalk outside the centuries-old Quiapo church.

Regardless of who wins the elections, the polls have been a boon for many, including Fatima de la Cruz, one of a dozen poor women in Quiapo church with an odd profession: They pray, in exchange for cash donations or gifts, for the yearnings of other people too busy for a long stay in the church. Lately, politicians have become clients.

Lacson's 8

"They ask me to pray for their safety and that they would not be cheated," De la Cruz said, clutching a rosary with large wooden beads inside the church.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson's faith in feng shui and numerology is stronger than his belief in the supposed science of pre-election surveys.

In fact, Lacson insists he has the numbers. The number 8 in particular, said to be his lucky numeral.

Lacson was on the campaign trail for 88 days. His last sorties were in Region 8 (Eastern Visayas). The last place he visited was Tacloban (City), which has 8 letters. His website is at www.888.ph. He will cast his vote today in his hometown of Imus in Cavite at 8 a.m. At one time, he asked his supporters to bring eight-by-eight clubs to guard the votes against possible cheating in the precincts.

His love for the number 8, however, doesn't carry over to his choice for the number of votes. The magic numbers for him are 10 million and three million.

"If I get less than three million votes, you won't see me in the Senate again. But if I get 10 million or more votes, you won't see me in the Senate again either, but that's because we'll see each other in Malacañang," he told members of media on Saturday during a thanksgiving dinner at the Century Park Sheraton.

The three-million figure is a challenge to Pulse Asia and the Social Weather Stations, polling firms that said he would only get 10 percent of the votes for president. Lacson's strategists believe that 10 percent of actual voters is roughly just three million, although there are more than 40 million registered voters.

Lacson got 10.5 million votes when he ran for the Senate in 2001. He believes he can win the five-way race if he could muster the same number of votes.

Chinoy support

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Lacson's belief in numerology and geomancy—clearly an influence of his Chinese-Filipino friends—also seemed to serve him in good stead. Funds continued to pour in even on the last day of the campaign.

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President of Chechnya killed in blast

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia—The Kremlin-backed president of Russia's warring Chechnya region and a top Russian general were killed Sunday when an explosion tore through a stadium in the Chechen capital where they were attending Victory Day observances marking the defeat of the Nazis in World War II, the republic's Interior Ministry said.

President Akhmad Kadyrov died about 30 minutes after the blast, likely caused by a land mine planted under the stadium's VIP seats, a ministry official said on condition of anonymity. Col. Gen. Valery Baranov, a top regional commander, died at the scene, the official said.

In all, four people were killed and 46 wounded, said Akhmad Dzherikhanov, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Emergency Situations southern Russian division.

The blast underlined the intense security problems even as the Kremlin says normalcy is being restored after nearly five years of fighting against separatist rebels.

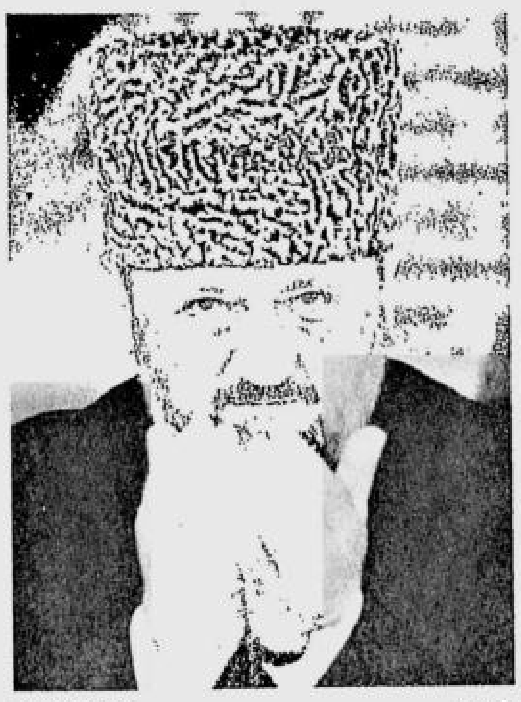
Russian soldiers are reported killed in near-daily small attacks by rebels and by rebel-set explosions.

Grozny, the war-ruined Chechen capital, has a huge presence of Russian forces, but they have not been able to purge insurgents from the city.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, but suspicion inevitably fell on the rebels.

"Justice will take the upper hand and retribution is inevitable," Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the conclusion of Moscow's Victory Day parade on Red Square, the Itar-Tass news agency reported.

Russia's NTV television broadcast footage of the stadium's VIP section collapsing into a jagged hole of torn wooden planks, sending up a plume of brown smoke. Panicked people dressed in their Sunday best clambered over the bleachers. One man was shown carrying a bloodied child, while men in uniform dragged a man resembling Kadyrov covered in blood away from the broken seating area. Shots rang out into the air.



KADYROV REUTERS

Another emergency ministry spokesperson, Sergei Kozhemyaka, said that a second land mine was found near the VIP seats. Russia's Echo of Moscow radio reported that numerous people were detained.

Russia marks the Allied victory over the Nazis every May 9 with military parades and fireworks around the country.

Security was especially tight across Russia. In 2002, a bomb exploded during a Victory Day military parade in the Caspian Sea port of Kaspiisk, killing 43 people, including 12 children.

Russian troops have been fighting Chechen insurgents from much of the last decade. The latest war began in September 1999. Despite superior numbers and firepower, Russian troops have been unable to uproot the rebels from their mountainous hideouts or banish them entirely from Grozny.

Kadyrov was a rebel commander during the separatists' 1994-96 war that ended with Russian forces withdrawing. However, he became disenchanted during the period of Chechnya's de-facto independence, complaining of the growing influence of the Wahhabi sect of Islam in the republic. *AP*

ЧЕЧНЯ
ГРОЗНЫЙ

A VIDEO grab from NTV Russian television shows security personnel helping a man (center), believed to be Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov, seconds after an explosion at a stadium in Grozny, May 9, during annual celebrations of "Victory Day." Russian President Vladimir Putin said a short time later that rebels fighting Moscow since the 1990s would face retribution for any attacks. REUTERS/NTV

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Dogged by bad news, Blair faces call for resignation

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair, dogged by speculation about his future, faced a call for his resignation on Sunday by a senior member of his Labour Party.

Lord David Puttnam, a Labour peer and personal friend of Blair, said months of negative headlines about Iraq would damage the party's electoral prospects and the prime minister should make way for finance minister Gordon Brown.

"The prime minister is synonymous with Iraq, and Iraq will only deliver bad news," Puttnam told ITV News television in an interview, the ITV website said.

"If I were him, I would go before the summer (parliamentary) recess," Puttnam said.

Blair's support for the war in Iraq, a U-turn on a referendum on a European Union constitution and an immigration policy widely seen as bungled, have crushed public trust and prompted speculation that Brown will take over.

An opinion poll on Sunday spelled further bad news for Blair. The YouGov poll in the Mail on Sunday newspaper said that Labour could only win an overall majority at the next election if the prime minister made way for Brown.

The poll also showed support for the war in Iraq at an all-time low following charges of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by British and American troops.

Four out of 10 people now believe Britain was right to invade Iraq, compared with six out of 10 in April last year.

Puttnam said if Iraq became a stable democracy over the next few years, Blair's decision to back the US-led war would be proved right.

But in the short-term, Blair should quit to bolster his party's prospects at the next election, expected in 2005.

"I think he can go with honor and I think he may well be in a position in five years from now to say not only did I do the right thing, but I paid a very high price for doing it." Puttnam, a renowned film producer, said Brown would "inevitably" be the man to take over.

"Gordon Brown is exactly the person who will at least be able to think that we focus things on the domestic agenda. And I suspect he would be able to win quite comfortably at a general election were it to be held within the next 12 months."

The YouGov poll showed Labour would win the election but fall short of a majority with Blair in charge. But it would win a majority of 77 seats if he handed over to Brown. *Reuters*

Fewer bright overseas students entering American universities

WASHINGTON—When a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University raced home to China to attend his father's funeral, he did not realize it would take him five nail-biting months to get a return visa to the United States.

As he awaited permission from the US authorities to return from Beijing, another post-doctoral fellow had already been hired by the Cambridge, Massachusetts, university to take over his biochemistry and molecular biology project.

"His experience seems all too common," said Harvard president Lawrence Summers as repercussions of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks still ring loudly for US-based and US-bound international students.

"Once here, students too often fear leaving the country because visa problems have prevented others from returning in time to resume work or classes," said Summers.

Summers, who brought the Chinese student's plight to the attention of US authorities, expressed concern over what he called "a trend that threatens the quality of research and scholarship" in US universities.

National statistics show the number of foreign scholars seeking to study in the United States, largely from Asia, has declined significantly over the past two years because they are being deterred by uncertainty over visas.

Because some of those behind the 9/11 attacks entered the country on student visas, the government is closely vetting applications.

"While we recognize that security threats require protective measures, we are concerned that America's position at the forefront of scholarship and discovery is threatened by the serious decline in international scholars seeking to study at our universities," Summers said in a letter to US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

In a separate letter to Tom Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security, Summers warned that if visa processes remained complicated and mired in delay, the United States risked losing some of its most talented scientists.

The Council of Graduate Studies, a Washington-based global group engaged in graduate education, research scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees, says 90 percent of US schools surveyed experienced a decrease in graduate school applications from international students this year. *AFP*

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Bush fails to quell prison abuse scandal

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"These individuals had been given the responsibility of overseeing Iraqis in American custody, and doing so in a decent and humane manner, consistent with US law and the Geneva Conventions (on the rules of war)," said Bush, who had apologized earlier in the week.

"Instead, we have seen shameful images of prisoners being subjected to abuse and humiliation," he said.

The British government, Bush's staunchest ally in the Iraq war, became further mired in the scandal, with three British papers publishing allegations of abuse by British troops.

The Daily Mirror published claims that members of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment had made photo CDs of beatings in Iraq to keep as souvenirs. The Independent quoted a former Iraqi prisoner as saying he had been beaten on the neck, chest and genitals by soldiers from the regiment.

And the Sunday Telegraph reported that British troops at the center of the allegations have been ordered to hand over every photograph they took in Iraq.

US officials acknowledge the images that have emerged since April 28 of Iraqi prisoners in sexually explicit and degrading poses have seriously damaged US standing, particularly in the Muslim world.

The foreign minister of Italy, a top US ally in the war, delivered some of the harshest criticism.

"This torture is a disgrace to the coalition of which we are a part and which is supposed to help the rebirth of a free Iraq," said Franco Frattini.

Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey summoned the US and British ambassadors to express "disgust and anger" at the revelations of mistreatment, the Foreign Ministry said.

Kuwait said the conduct of the US military amounted to "crimes against humanity."

Malaysia demanded tough punishment for those responsible, and German Foreign Minister Joshka Fischer called the photos "disgusting."

In testimony Friday to congressional committees, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld apologized for the abuses—but issued chilling warning that worse was yet to emerge.

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Saudi Arabia's Arab News daily became the latest newspaper to call for Rumsfeld to step down, dismissing his apology for the abuse.

Iraq, the paper opined, "is a country lurching toward chaos while the people some hoped would help to save it ... now stand revealed as liars, torturers and murderers."

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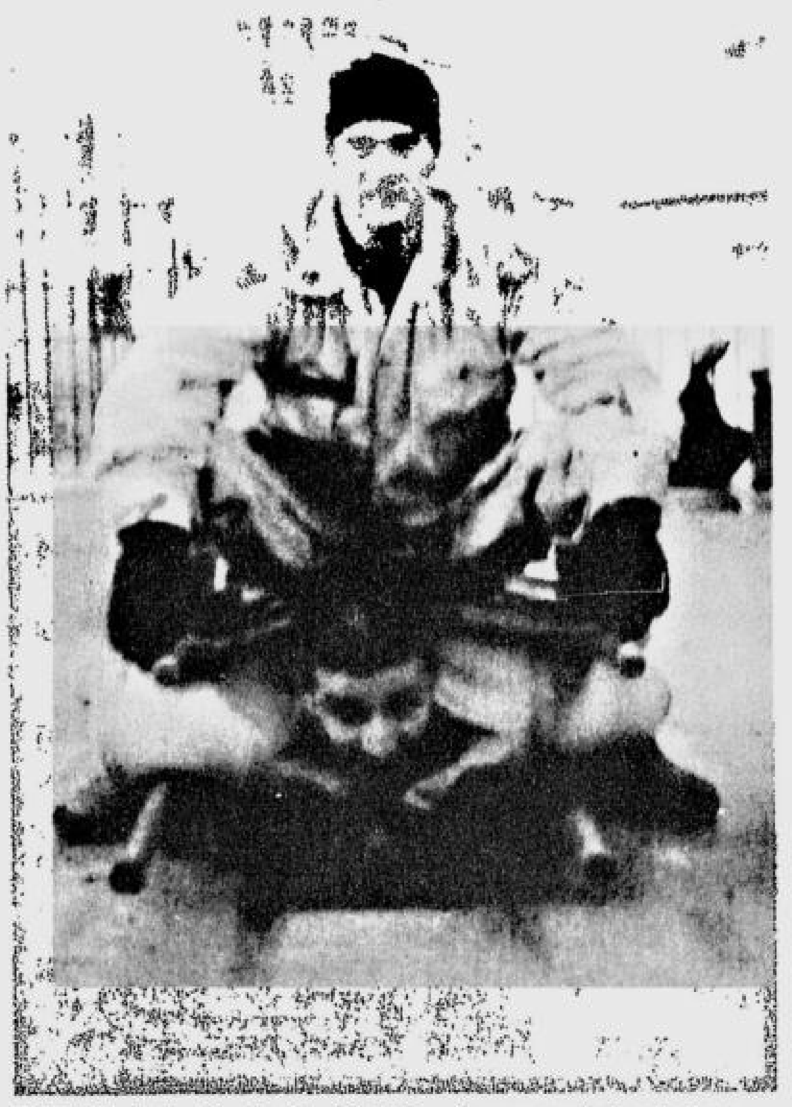

PICTURE obtained by the New York Times from an undisclosed source shows a US soldier sitting on an Iraqi detainee sandwiched between two stretchers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq. AP PHOTO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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HANOVER, Germany—An 18-year-old German man faces up to five years in prison after he confessed to creating the Internet Sasser worm which infected millions of computers worldwide, police said Saturday.

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"Stimulated by discussion with classmates passionate, as he is, about computers, he also developed 'Netsky'," a second worm that mocks experts hunting for the Sasser creators, he said.

The Sasser worm struck on May 1, and in less than a week affected thousands of companies and as many as 18 million computers worldwide, forcing some businesses to shut temporarily in order to debug their systems.

The worm attacks a flaw in recent versions of Microsoft's Windows operating systems—Windows 2000, Windows Server 2003 and Windows XP—and forces the computer into an unstoppable pattern of shutting down, then rebooting. It apparently does no lasting harm.

"The suspect said he underestimated the extent of the damage" caused by the worm, said prosecutor Helmut Trentmann.

In an edition due out Monday, the news weekly Der Spiegel named the author of the worm as Sven J., a graduate of a technical secondary school who has yet to get his high school diploma. *AFP*

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The use of any of these techniques requires the approval of senior Pentagon officials and, in some cases, of the defense secretary, according to the report.

Interrogators must justify that the harshest treatment is "militarily necessary," The Post cited one of the officials as saying.

Once approved, the harsher treatment must be accompanied by "appropriate medical monitoring," the paper said.

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The Central Intelligence Agency has its own guidelines used in detention centers.

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Pictures taken at Abu Ghraib show Iraqi prisoners forced by prison personnel into sexually explicit and degrading poses, ordered to wear women's underwear over their heads, or held on a dog leash by a US female prison guard. *AFP*

Taiwan's Chen seeks to silence critics with vote recount

TAIPEI—Taiwan is on Monday to begin a recount of ballots cast in March presidential elections, as declared winner Chen Shui-bian seeks to end a two-month standoff with the opposition over the disputed vote.

Chen bowed to demands for a recount days after the March 20 vote in a bid to stamp out opposition protests over his narrow win and lingering claims over an election-eve shooting in which he and Vice President Annette Lu were injured.

Court officials said they expected the recount, which is predicted to confirm the result, to be completed before Chen's scheduled inauguration on May 20. According to Taiwan's election law, Chen is considered the election's winner unless the recount proves otherwise.

Under the supervision of Taiwan's High Court, all 16.5 million ballots are to be re-examined across the island, court spokesperson Wen Yao-yuan said.

Some 480 teams of judges, lawyers and representatives from the Kuomintang (KMT)-led opposition and Chen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will carry out the recount behind closed doors.

The process will be filmed to ensure transparency, Wen said.

Chen, who won a second four-year term, agreed to the recount following mass demonstrations involving tens of thousands of opposition supporters.

The rallies were sparked by opposition allegations of voting irregularities and claims that the election-eve shooting, which left Chen and his deputy Annette Lu slightly injured, had swung the result in favor of the DPP.

Wu Tung-yeh, a political science professor at National Chengchi University, said Chen had agreed to the recount in an effort to create stability, amid warnings that the political stalemate could scare off foreign investment. *AFP*

MALTA CELEBRATION
Fireworks explode around Fort St. Angelo in Valletta's Grand Harbor as celebrations marking Malta's accession into the European Union continue May 8. The annual fireworks festival was brought forward this year in order to coincide with the celebrations. REUTERS

Obesity gains ground as worldwide killer

LONDON—It's a bitter truth to swallow: About every fourth person on Earth is too fat. Obesity is fast becoming one of the world's leading reasons why people die.

In an astonishing testament to globalization, this outbreak of girth is occurring just as doctors everywhere but sub-Saharan Africa are winning the fight against infectious diseases from smallpox to malaria.

Now a new enemy is emerging in the 21st century—our appetite. Around the globe, about 1.7 billion people should lose weight, according to the International Obesity Task Force. Of those who are overweight, about 312 million are obese—at least 13.5 kilograms over their top recommended weight.

Already, a third of all deaths globally are from ailments linked to weight, lack of exercise and smoking. And perhaps most worrisome is obesity's spread beyond wealthy western nations.

From the glaciers of Iceland to the palm-fringed beaches of the Philippines, there are now more fat people in the world than hungry people. And in extreme cases, people who are heavy since childhood could die as much as five to 10 years early.

"The developing world in particular is going to bear the enormous brunt of this weight gain," said Neville Rigby, policy director of the IOTF.

"We're even seeing obesity in adolescents in India now. It's universal. It has become a fully global epidemic—indeed, a pandemic."

Certainly the United States—home of the Whopper and the Super Big Gulp—remains a nation of scale-busters, with two of every three Americans overweight. *AP*

VIVIAN Espada, 26, walks away from a convenience store in Coamo, Puerto Rico, April 25. AP

Skyrocketing US fuel prices reopens debate on gas-guzzling

By Louise Daly

CHICAGO—Record-high US gasoline prices have socked American motorists in the wallet, but it is still unclear whether it will put the brakes on sales of gas guzzling trucks and sport-utilities.

Automakers insist it is business as usual, but softening sales of large SUVs and a new wave of truck incentives has intensified speculation that the effect of the record gasoline prices are being felt on the showroom floor.

General Motors Corp. economist Paul Ballew gave the theory short shrift during a teleconference with analysts this week.

"We're monitoring it, tracking it, analyzing it, looking at it whichever way we possibly can," he said, and "we just really struggle to see an impact."

Nationwide, a gallon (3.8 liters) of unleaded gasoline averaged a record $1.87 Friday, up 37 cents from a year ago, according to the American Automobile Association.

In parts of California, where state emissions laws tend to inflate gas prices, it was closer to $3 a gallon.

And with the price of US crude hitting a 13-year high of $40 a barrel Friday, analysts see no relief any time soon.

And while truck sales continue to outpace those of passenger cars, as they have done for the past two years, sales of large SUVs fell off a cliff last month.

They were off 11 percent after strong first-quarter gains, according to Ward's Auto.

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GM brand manager Mike DiGiovanni insisted the promotion "had been built into the budget," a long time ago, in order to clear out 2004 model year stocks ahead of the summer launch of 2005 model-year H2s.

It was not a response to the 20-percent decline in Hummer sales last month, he said.

"At this point, there's just no evidence to suggest that gas prices are affecting sales," he said, adding that he was tracking it closely.

The most common complaint from owners of the uber-SUV, which averages about 10 mpg around town, is its poor fuel efficiency.

Ford Motor Co. sales analyst George Pipas also discounted talk of the impact of fuel prices on vehicle sales, saying any effect was only being felt "on the margins" of the business.

But if the price hikes haven't ended Americans' love-fest with the cargo-carrying sport utes, they have certainly given them pause for thought.

In a recent survey for insurance giant Progressive, 16 percent of people polled said they would consider buying a more fuel-efficient vehicle in the future.

In a separate poll for automotive analysis firm, Kelley Blue Book, one in six people said they had already changed their mind about what vehicle they plan to purchase due to high fuel costs.

Paul Taylor, an economist for the National Automobile Dealers Association, in McLean, Virginia, pointed to double-digit, year-over-year sales gains by Kia and Suzuki last month. *AFP*

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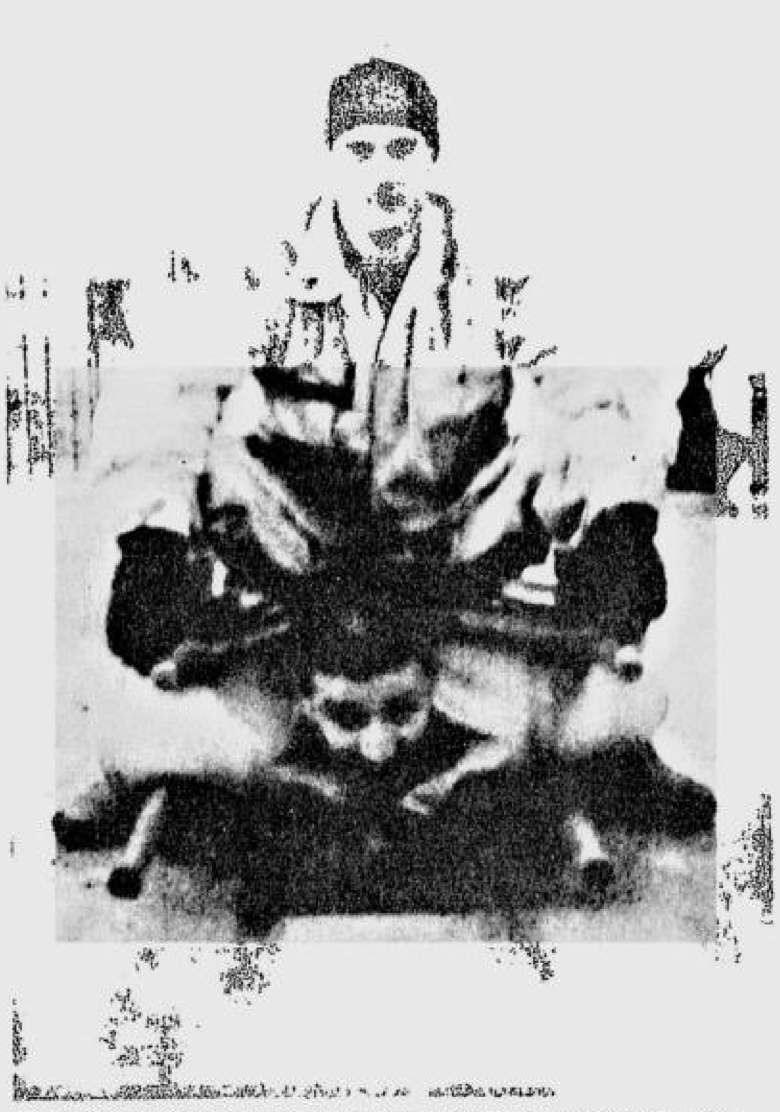

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GM brand manager Mike Di Giovanni insisted the promotion "had been built into the budget," a long time ago, in order to clear out 2004 model year stocks ahead of the summer launch of 2005 model-year H2s.

It was not a response to the 20-percent decline in Hummer sales last month, he said.

"At this point, there's just no evidence to suggest that gas prices are affecting sales," he said, adding that he was tracking it closely.

The most common complaint from owners of the uber-SUV, which averages about 10 mpg around town, is its poor fuel efficiency.

Ford Motor Co sale analyst George Pipas also discounted talk of the impact of fuel prices on vehicle sales, saying any effect was only being felt "on the margins" of the business.

But if the price hikes haven't ended Americans' love-fest with the cargo-carrying sport utes, they [illegible] pause for [illegible]

In [illegible] recent survey for insurance giant Progressive, 16 percent [illegible] people polled said they would consider buying a more fu[illegible] future [illegible] Kelley Blue Book [illegible] people said they had [illegible] changed their mind about [illegible] vehicle they plan to pu[illegible] high fuel costs.

"Paul Tay[illegible] economist for the National Automobile Deale[illegible] [illegible] *AFP*

Nepal still in turmoil despite PM's resignation

KATHMANDU—At least 22 people have died in renewed fighting with Maoist rebels since Nepal's royalist prime minister stepped down last week in hope of ending political turmoil in the kingdom, an official said Sunday.

The violence came as opposition parties which had sought the sacking of pro-royal Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa vowed to step up more than a month of protests unless their communist candidate became the new premier.

A security official said 22 rebels were gunned down in at least four clashes since the prime minister's resignation Friday.

He said the rebels, who want to overthrow the monarchy, also snatched 36 teachers and students from a school Friday in the western Sindhuli district and were believed to be forcing them into indoctrination sessions.

King Gyanendra, who fired the elected prime minister in 2002 in part for failing to tackle the insurgency, said in accepting Thapa's resignation that the next premier must work to defeat the rebels.

"The king wants the next government to be formed including all parties under the leadership of a person who has a clean image and who can restore peace in the country and begin the process of parliamentary elections before mid-April next year," a palace statement said at the weekend.

King Gyanendra and Queen Komal Sunday visited the royal family's ancestral town of Gorkha where 38 Hindu priests held a special bonfire to pray for peace and stability in the kingdom, a palace official said.

The Maoists, who control much of the countryside, have not reacted to Thapa's resignation. But the rebels have said the choice of prime minister in Kathmandu made no difference to them.

"The government does not matter so long as it is chosen by the king. What we want is a new constitution so the king may no longer exploit the people," senior Maoist Baburam Bhattarai said in a statement last week.

Bhattarai led the Maoist side in three rounds of failed negotiations with the royalist government last year. More than 2,500 people have died since the rebels left the talks in August and ended a ceasefire, according to human rights groups.

Despite their disinterest in the power struggle in Kathmandu, the Maoists have offered moral support to the opposition which has brought out thousands of protesters daily since April 1 demanding the king to restore democracy.

Hundreds returned to the streets Saturday after the prime minister's resignation and chanted slogans against the king. The opposition has refused to call off a two-day strike set to start Tuesday.

"We'll stop our movement only after the king agrees to appoint a new prime minister recommended by the five parties," senior opposition leader Bharat Mohan Adhikari said Saturday.

The five-party opposition alliance has proposed premier Madhav Kumar Nepal, a communist and the main opposition leader in the dissolved parliament. *AFP*

Saddam was badly wounded in Desert Storm, says doctor

DUBAI—Saddam Hussein was seriously wounded during an allied bombing raid in the 1991 Gulf war and had to be operated on, the deposed Iraqi president's personal doctor said in comments published Sunday.

"The main operation I carried out on the former president took place during the Gulf war, to be exact on Feb. 1 (1991) after he suffered deep wounds," Ala Bashir told Asharq al-Awsat in an interview.

"I was called out in an emergency to the Ibn Sina hospital which was reserved for Iraqi leaders and found Saddam Hussein in the operating theater, his face and uniform covered in so much blood I thought he was dead.

"Saddam told me he had been hurt in a road accident, but it was clear from the state he was in that it was the result of bombing," the doctor related.

SADDAM

"He was injured in the jaw which had a major deep wound in a semicircle right to the bone. He had also been cut on his left cheek and over his eyebrow. The little finger on his right hand had been cut and was hanging off.

"I operated and stitched the finger back on and, to my great surprise, three months later there was no scar."

Before his overthrow in April 2003, speculation was rife about the health of Saddam who ruled Iraq with an iron fist from 1979.

Western and Arab media carried occasional reports that he was gravely ill, even dead, notably from leukemia.

US forces captured Saddam last Dec. 13 hiding down a hole near his hometown of Tikrit, north of Baghdad.

Iraq's new interim rulers intend to put him on trial for crimes against humanity. *AFP*

BRIDES-IN-TRAINING
Potential Indian brides take part in a class at the "Manju Sansar Kendra" (Manju Traditional School) in Bhopal. The school aims to smooth a bride's path with a special three-month training course which includes cooking, sewing and daily prayers. AFP

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Viagra use gives away cheating hubbies

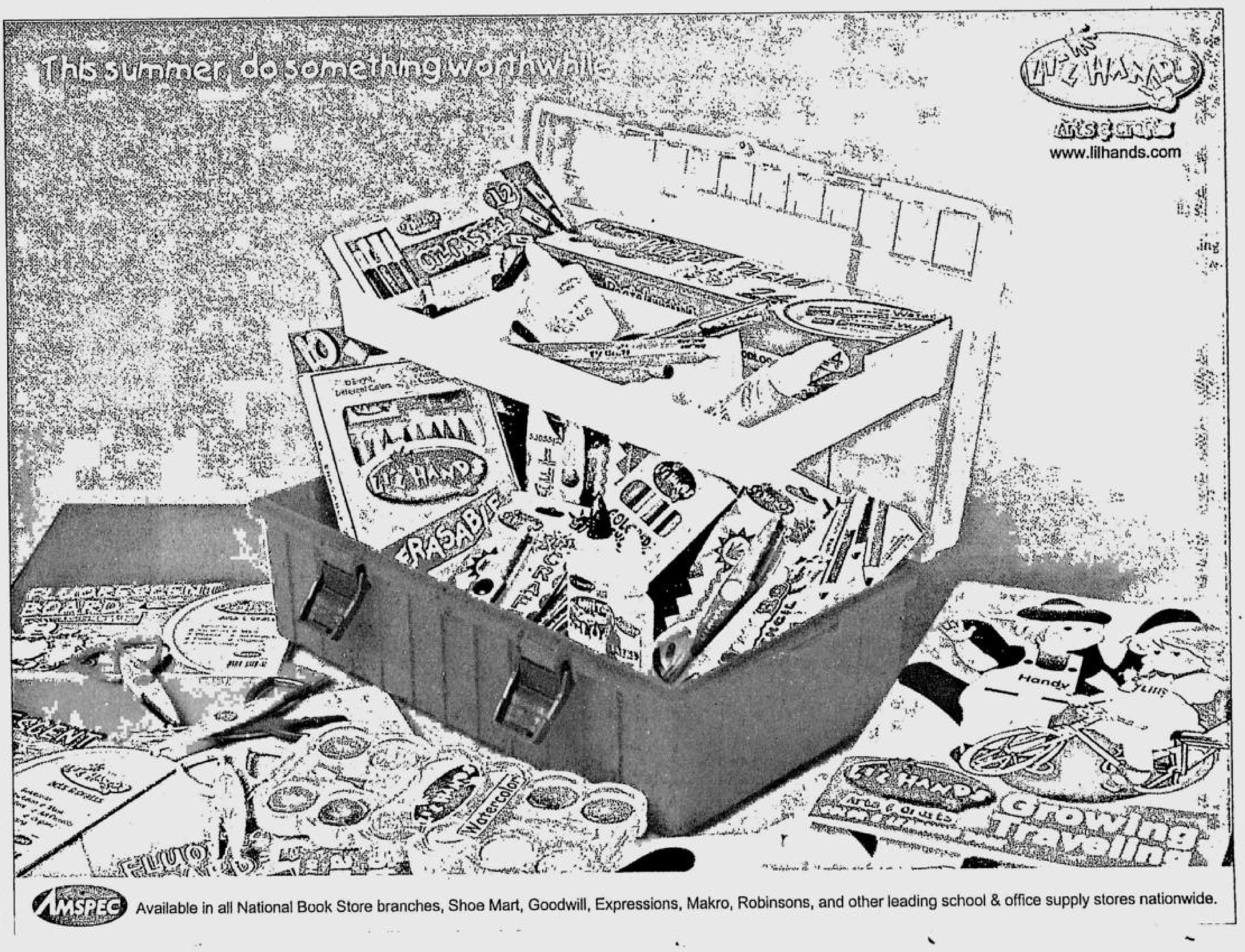
SINGAPORE—Viagra is increasingly the downfall of unfaithful husbands, whose wives find the little blue pills as proof of their spouses' secret flings, the Sunday Times said.

Lawyers and private investigators told the newspaper they had handled as many as 15 cases involving unfaithful husbands found by their wives to have secretly bought Viagra.

In many cases, the husband usually told the wife he was too tired and stressed to have sex but often stayed out very late, claiming to be with friends or in the workplace, said lawyer Foo Siew Fong.

One of her clients found the blue pills in her husband's possession and was immediately suspicious as they do not have sex because he suffers from erectile dysfunction.

"If he's not doing it with her, of course he's doing it with someone else," Foo said. *AFP*



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OPINION

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EDITORIALS

The vote

THE NATION, for only the 11th time since 1946, goes to the polls today to choose the country's chief executive. Not only is our future at stake, but apparently our past is involved too. The Commission on Elections' bloated list of voters includes—by the Comelec chair's own admission—its share of the dead.

By and large, the election agency has met the mininmum requirements for conducting a national election—but just barely. Now it is up to every citizen to pick up from where the Comelec left off, and make the elections a true reflection of public opinion. Diligence and vigilance are the order of the day: diligence in taking time out to study the issues and cast our vote; vigilance in protecting our ballot and the integrity of the entire vote.

The elections are not only a referendum on the voting public's preferences for president; they are also the means by which all but 11 elected officials (the senators who were elected three years ago) receive their mandate.

Are the elections a choice between change and continuity? Four of the five presidential candidates are running on a platform of change. But the incumbent has complicated the issue by promising both continuity and change, primarily of the constitutional kind. And her main rival has added a complication of his own: many of his senatorial candidates foreshadow not so much change but a return to the past.

Are the elections a choice between confirmation of Edsa II and vindication of "Edsa III"? The candidates for national office have blurred the distinctions, with famous personalities associated with one or the other not so much sitting on the fence but jumping over it, or jumping back to the other side.

The result: A century since we first declared our independence, some 70 years since the start of the Commonwealth, almost 60 years since the end of World War II, and less than two decades since the restoration of democracy in 1986, our elections continue to be personalistic: a vote for those we trust, instead of party or policy or program or performance.

This is not reason to take today's democratic test lightly; hope truly springs eternal, and the ballot in our hand may yet be the beginning of true continuity and lasting change.

The bout

THE NATION was cheated yesterday of something that rightfully belonged to it: a live telecast of the Las Vegas fight of people's world featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao. (The resulting draw with Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico was also controversial, for a different reason.)

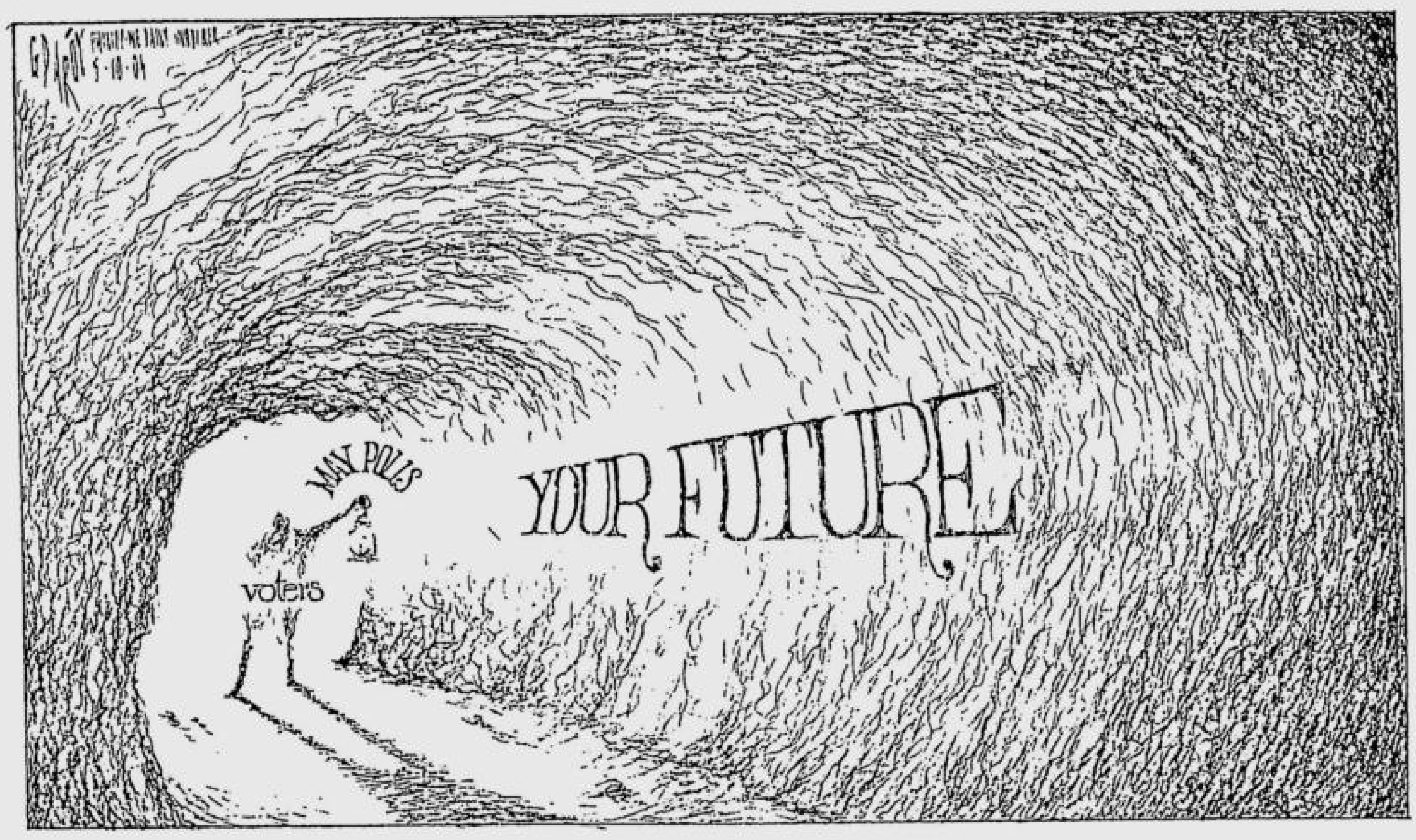
The Philippine broadcast of the fight started some two hours after the match ended in the United States. Those with relatives abroad knew the result by noon yesterday, some four hours before the rest of the country did. Apparently, when Solar Sports and RPN 9 billed their Pacquiao-Marquez coverage as live, they were using a different dictionary.

One half of the problem lay in the telecast's commercial load. The number of ads went past the viewing public's patience and way past the limits of plain and simple decency. Everyone in this boxing-savvy country knows that boxers take only a one-minute break in between rounds. A 10-minute intermission for advertising means the fight, in real time, has already progressed by at least two rounds before the program resumes.

The other half of the problem lay in the basic programming decision to air two undercard bouts first, starting at the time the main event got underway in Las Vegas. If Solar and RPN did not have the rights to air the Pacquiao-Marquez match live, then they should have paid more to acquire it. And then taken the Super Bowl approach: air it live, air it on time—and charge accordingly. That would have allowed the nation to root and pray for Pacquiao in real time.

One of the ringside commentators in Las Vegas alluded to the Philippines' consuming interest in the title bout, which may yet end up as the best fight of the year. "A whole country looking on tonight...," he said, sometime during the 10th round. Unfortunately, by the time his words reached the country, the fight was already over.

Those behind yesterday's broadcast made a pile of money, but at the country's expense. A losing boxer's old complaint has become the nation's own: "We wuz robbed!"



The kingmakers: RP ayatollahs and polling firms

(Continued from last Friday, May 7)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE SUPREME Court refused to decide on the merits of two petitions. One sought to prevent religious groups from endorsing candidates. The other asked the tribunal to order the enforcement of a provision of the Fair Elections Act prohibiting the publication of the results of political surveys before an election, which, the petitioners said, unfairly and illegally influence the electorate to vote for certain candidates, thus making the playing field uneven. In the first case, the petitioners argued that the religious groups violate the constitutional provision on the separation of Church and State by meddling in politics.

The Court dismissed the petitions not because they were without merit but because they were "technically defective," and because, if granted, they would deprive the people of "the freedom of choice and of expression."

Wrong, I think. On the contrary, leaders of religious organizations—like the Iglesia ni Cristo, El Shaddai, Jesus is Lord Movement and others—in dictating to their followers whom to vote for, actually deprive them of their freedom of choice. Some of their followers may want to vote for candidates other than those in the sample ballots of their organizations, but are afraid to disobey the wishes of their elders. Thus, they are deprived of their free will. Yet free will as a gift of God to humans is a basic teaching of the Christian religion.

From biblical times, religion was the tool with which the elite ruled the poor, the ignorant and the superstitious. They were threatened with the wrath of God and the fires of Hell if they disobeyed the orders of their religious leaders who abused their powers. The abuses of the Spanish friars were among the main causes of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The abuses of religious leaders caused one of the blackest periods in world history: the Inquisition. The abuses of modern-day ayatollahs caused the genocide in Iran. Religious fanaticism caused the Crusaders of Europe to invade and despoil Muslim lands during the Middle Ages. And the same religious fanaticism now threatens the whole world with terrorism.

The same fanaticism, abuse of power, ignorance, fear, superstition and subservience still grip many people today, in this supposedly enlightened 21st century. Was it the communists who said "religion is the opium of the people"? In times of extreme poverty, more people turn to religion. When you have nothing, the only hope you can cling on to is God who is merciful and capable of solving any problem. Religious leaders take advantage of this belief to force their flocks to do their bidding, such as vote for candidates of their choice.

And because their fanatical followers supposedly number in the millions and can spell the difference between winning and losing elections, leaders with ambitions to rule the whole nation pay obeisance like vassals to these Filipino ayatollahs to beg for their blessings. Thus, supposedly outstanding leaders of 83 million Filipinos behave like serfs before these "men of God" claiming two to four million followers.

Thus, religious leaders become "kingmakers" by merely endorsing some candidates. Although they command only a minority of the voters, people are stampeded into voting for their candidates because of this extreme weakness of the Filipino, the so-called "bandwagon mentality." They always want to be with the winner.

"*Sayang lang ang boto ko,*" the Filipino voter rationalizes, not wanting to waste his vote on a loser.

To him I say this: The candidate trailing in the opinion polls needs your vote more; the leading candidate doesn't and will not be as grateful as the first. Don't lose heart just because your preferred candidate is behind. The opinion polls are not that accurate. They have been wrong before and they can be wrong again. If you desert your candidate just because of the polls, how can he win? But if you stick with him and convince others to vote for him, he can win.

Which leads us to the other "kingmaker"—the opinion pollster. By merely coming out with results favoring certain candidates, he stampedes voters into voting for them because of this damned "bandwagon mentality." The pollster influences the whole nation to make the candidate of his choice win. He actually influences the future of a nation. Such power cannot be entrusted in the hands of pollsters who are not accountable to the nation. This is what the Fair Elections Act sought to prevent by prohibiting the publication of the results of opinion polls—not the polls themselves—days or weeks before an election.

But the Supreme Court said prohibiting them violates the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression. And yet the same Court affirmed the constitutionality of the law regulating political advertising. But the publication of the results of a poll favoring certain candidates is an even more potent form of advertising.

Besides, polls can be manipulated. If the official results of the elections, supervised by the Commission on Elections, can be manipulated, why not those of polling firms?

Pollsters claim their records speak for themselves, that the results of their surveys reflect the results of the elections. I think it is the other way around. Survey results become self-fulfilling precisely because of this "bandwagon mentality." People vote the way the surveys predict they would because of it. But I'm pretty sure that if there were no publication of survey results, the election outcomes would be different.

Do not go out and vote

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DO not go out and vote if you think the elections are already over.

That, of course, is what the GMA and FPJ camps have been telling you. The GMA camp more than the FPJ camp, though the latter won't be bested there. The image I see is of two boxers raising their hands at the end of a fight, both proclaiming themselves victors—hoping the judges would be influenced so. Fortunately, in boxing, the judges rule on points and not on the self-proclamations of the fighters, or their handlers. Of course, sometimes they rule on the Mob or Don King getting to them, but that's another story.

You agree that the elections are over, GMA has gotten the nod of the Iglesia ni Cristo and the El Shaddai, two cults which take their flock to be sheep in the most literal sense, as bovine creatures to be led by the nose, and often to the slaughter, then you may as well stay at home. Though I remember years ago getting a letter from someone who begged me to keep his name confidential, saying he begged to differ with his church, the INC, on matters political. This was shortly after the so-called "Edsa III," the bulk of the horde that descended on the Shrine being INC. They did have written injunctions, though couched in veiled terms, to join the forces at Edsa on pain of sin, my letter-writer said, but he personally had not done so. He had wrestled with his conscience, he said, and decided not to go. Though he remained loyal to his church, he said, he did not feel he had sinned by his disobedience.

I cannot talk *ex cathedra*, but I can at least assure him with reasonable certainty he hasn't. God or Allah or Jehovah has not been known to sanction iniquity. Or speak through those who wreak it.

The same is true in elections. The only sin in voting is not voting according to your conscience. The principle is: "The voice of the people is the voice of God." It is not: "The voice of sheep is the voice of God." God has better things to do than bleat.

If you think the elections are over, as GMA's and FPJ's supporters have been telling you, then don't bother to vote. Stay home and watch the Cartoon Network. I've always wondered about the logic that says "Vote for the person who is sure to win." If someone is sure to win, why vote? The logical conclusion is not to vote, not vote for the "sure win." Your vote has no meaning, it won't count anyway. If the fate of the elections is already sealed, if the fate of the elections does not depend on the piece of paper that you seal and deposit into the ballot box, why do anything? Better stay home and not add to the traffic leading to the elementary schools manned by public school teachers whose salaries can't be raised because the government has no money. All of it has gone to making GMA posters.

Do not go out and vote if you think you have no choice but to vote between the lesser of two evils.

If you think this country has become so impoverished you have no choice but to vote—as Joker Arroyo puts it—between a corrupt and a stupid candidate, better just stay home, look at the Atlas or miniature globe and try to find the best place to relocate to. I'm still startled by Joker's preference for the corrupt over the stupid on the ground that we have a constitutional remedy for the first (you can impeach a president for corruption) but not the second (you can't impeach a president for stupidity). Well, if you have a stupid president, maybe you won't need a constitutional remedy. Maybe he'll be too stupid to be corrupt.

But what a choice! Have we really come to this? If that is so, then the real choice for us is not to vote for either GMA or FPJ but to vote whether to stay in this country or not. Why on earth, or heaven, should these elections simply be a choice between one evil and another? Why on earth, or heaven, should these elections simply be a choice between GMA and FPJ? There are other candidates. Not all of them are corrupt or stupid. One is perfectly honest and capable.

If you think your vote is wasted on the good and decent because he or she has "no chance to win," then don't vote at all. You are not adding to the sum of human good, you are subtracting from it. To vote is a duty to vote as best you can, it is not an obligation to vote as worst you can. Or it is a duty to vote eagerly, with joy in your heart, not to vote tepidly, with lead in your feet. The only vote that is wasted is the one you throw at the feet of the undeserving because he or she "will win anyway." The undeserving will win, but you won't.

But if you believe the fate of the elections does not rest on the stars but on your will, if you believe the power of candidates to win does not lie in their charisma or in your taxes that they have been free to waste but in the power you hold in your hands, if you believe the elections remain as open and full of possibility as the future is to the youth, then by all means rouse yourself up from bed, take the jeep or walk, and wait your turn before the polling booths.

If you believe that these elections are not about choosing the lesser evil but about choosing between good and evil; if you believe that your vote will matter in deciding not just who will rape and pillage the country less but who will pluck this country from the poverty and despair it has sunk to and make it the best that it can be; if you believe that no vote of conscience is ever wasted but that it is a beacon in a storm-tossed sea beckoning harbor, or a sign that tells all those rushing to throw themselves off the cliff, "Danger up ahead," then by all means brave the heat, search for your name in the wilderness of lists on the bulletin boards, and search your soul in the quiet of the voting booth.

You owe it to the country. You owe it to yourself.

Pacquiao's superb fighting spirit

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

POLITICS stepped aside yesterday as the entire nation was riveted to the Pacquiao-Marquez world featherweight fight in Las Vegas that resulted in a draw. Our own Manny Pacquiao did not succeed in sustaining his three knock downs of the Mexican defending champ, but he exhibited an incredible fighting spirit all the way to the 12th round. Pacquiao did the nation proud by exhibiting the heart of a real champ. *Mabuhay ka*, Manny—we're very proud of you.

* * *

The specter of massive fraud in today's elections is being raised by various quarters. It's evident that the opposition is capitalizing on the perception, borne out by a recent SWS survey, that the administration, rather than the opposition, is more prone to do the cheating because it is the only one with the resources to do such a thing. Cheating however, can be done by both sides. For instance there's talk that opposition leaders are manufacturing fake certificates of canvass as "proof" of cheating. It seems that the opposition has concentrated on tainting the elections. Unfortunately, some prominent Church leaders have been reckless in buying the line about a massive plan to cheat. The sad thing is that tainted elections would hurt not just the administration but the entire country as well—because it would foment instability and destroy our image as a working democracy.

* * *

The opposition's warnings about cheating, however, could be just a cover-up for its impending defeat. At this point the administration is *llamado*; it does not have to resort to cheating to win. It has the endorsement of big religious sects that have command votes, such as the Iglesia ni Cristo, El Shaddai and Jesus Miracle Crusade.

Then, too, the KNP suffers from a defective machinery. In nearly 50 percent of the country, it has no candidates, whereas in many areas, President Macapagal-Arroyo is being endorsed by several major local candidates even as they fiercely battle one another. For instance, in San Fernando City, Pampanga, mayoralty rivals former Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo and Rep. Oscar Rodriguez are both supporting GMA. The same is true in Leyte, where Jericho Petilla and former Rep. Sergio Apostol are fighting for the governorship, and in Cebu where candidates for governor, Gwen Garcia of the prominent Garcia clan, and John John Osmeña, son of Sen. John O are all supporting GMA.

If FPJ's KNP has no candidates in nearly 50 percent of the country, this means it has little or no machinery there to pull the voters in—and no watchers in the precincts.

* * *

Then too, in the battle for the votes of class E, FPJ and GMA are tied at 37 percent, as per the surveys. Which means that FPJ is not drawing from Class E the votes he needs to cover his deficits in the ABCD classes, where GMA leads him. GMA's arrest of FPJ's surge in class E, which helps account for her seven-point edge, is due as much to her incredible *sipag* and *tiyaga* in campaigning, as well as to FPJ's self-destructing ways—no intelligible program, poor PR with the media. Above all, it is due to the disastrous split of the opposition votes among FPJ, Panfilo Lacson, Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva. Had they united, *talo si* GMA.

* * *

Friends have called me to campaign for my respected friend, Bro. Eddie Villanueva. My answer has been simple: his morality crusade did not come through in two crucial fights in the last Congress. When the Namfrel group and Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella filed an impeachment charge against then Comelec Commissioner Luz Tancangco, the party-list Cibac led by Villanueva's son, Rep. Joel Villanueva, which purports to battle corruption, chose to side with the Nationalist People's Coalition. And, in the impeachment charge against Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Cibac again didn't come through. Needless to say, I was quite disappointed in those two instances.

* * *

Former PSCO chair Manoling Morato was in a real quandary yesterday afternoon. Without any announcement, FPJ and Susan Roces suddenly dropped in at Manoling's private chapel in his building on Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City, doubtless to pray before the image of Our Lady of Manaoag there. But Manoling, his political instincts quite honed, sensed this unexpected visit could embarrass him with GMA, and he chose to stay in bed and nurse his flu rather than face his visitor. In a later conversation with this columnist, Manoling couldn't hide his resentment that his childhood friend FPJ would compromise him with GMA, whom he has openly supported. I think he's entitled to that feeling—FPJ should have been more sensitive to Manoling's predicament.

* * *

We saw all kinds of TV ads this campaign season, most of them involving prancing girls and prancing candidates, many of them looking quite ridiculous in the process. The ad that takes the cake for "statesmanship" was that of Sen. Joker Arroyo plugging for former Sen. Heherson Alvarez. Shot in his book-lined study, the TV ad showed the barong-clad Arroyo quite statesmanlike as he exhorted viewers to return Alvarez to the Senate. *Malaki ang hatak ni* Joker.

* * *

House deputy secretary general for public relations and information Noel Albano called yesterday to react to the INQUIRER story where a spokesperson of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., one Ernesto Macahiya, accused Speaker Jose de Venecia as the brains behind the printing of sample PGBI ballots junking FPJ in favor of GMA. The spokesperson also accused JDV of spreading speculations that Sen. Gregorio Honasan has junked FPJ. Albano stressed that Mel Verano, a close adviser of Honasan, has already denied the accusation of Macahiya against JDV. He also scoffed at Macahiya's claim that the PGBI has no funds to manufacture 500,000 sample ballots. At 10 centavos per sample ballot, that's only P50,000, says Noel.

What a tangled web!

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

OH, what a terrible web they wove when they endeavored to explain the P6.2 million allegedly paid to Nora Aunor.

With the suddenness the purloined check broke into the news, all of Da Queen's men were caught absolutely clueless. Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman had to do some quick damage control with a hastily assembled press conference, the first ever in the history of Philippine journalism called for the purpose of displaying a check.

But I could neither tell where the commas and periods fell nor how many zeros adorned the figures 6 and 2, distracted as I was by the glitter of the heavy gold necklace she wore and the sparkle of the crystals that dangled from her ears.

I don't know how much more we can take of this sorry scheme of things. And though I really hate to say this—famous already as we are for our propensity for self-flagellation—I must say we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Because from the moment Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo swore, on the day sanctified by the execution of Jose Rizal, that she was not going to run for the presidency and we believed her, we made ourselves accomplices in institutionalizing duplicity in our government, which finds so apt a metaphor in the "Gloria Look-alike" contest that mercifully ended just as I was writing this.

The day after she made that vow, she began her campaign and the hoax was on, and we didn't know what hit us until that day in October last year when she announced that she was running after all. With the accidental power we handed her as we giddily danced to RJ Jacinto's "Grey and White" albums, she set in motion the weaving of a web the likes of which we have not seen since Marcos.

From then on the line between campaigning and governance became blurred. And as wrongdoing surfaced almost daily in the media, the web of lies got even larger, ensnaring all. There was nothing we could do about it because it was "governance," and any objection to patently corrupt capers would be shot down as obstructionism, or worse, betrayal of the poor for whom the heart of this administration was hemorrhaging.

But one image of the poor, frozen in a newspaper photo that is filed in my mind, comes to haunt. It is that of a group of grim-faced deportees, mostly women and children just arrived aboard a naval LST. Nothing wrong with that except for the sight of Soliman in the midst of them, her wide smile a jarring, disturbing contrast in the funereal tableau. And the news story told us why: it was afternoon, lunch had been withheld until the arrival of GMA for photo-ops.

The poor have been truly held hostage by this administration; worse, they are being used in the most obscene way. Anybody who questions the raid on the Pagcor funds is held at bay by the self-righteous revelation that the money was used to provide "access to clean water for the urban poor." You object to Gloria's Patubig sa Barangay Program, heaven help you because you will reap the wrath of the urban poor. And so on.

But not all the water of the Patubig can wash the blood off the hands of Lady Macbeth in this deed most foul.

There is, for example, the almost full-page print ad of the group that calls itself "Pro-Gloria" in the May 4 issue of the INQUIRER, saying that "yes, President Gloria has been using government funds... to help the poor," listing six programs and projects to prove it.

These are the Kalsada Natin, Aalagaan Natin (Kanan) that claims to have employed 300,000 people with "total wages paid amounting to more than P1.4 billion," the PhilHealth program that provides "free health care for the indigents," at a cost of "about P3 billion," the student assistance fund for a strong republic (SAFFASR) with an allocation of P500 million.

To entice government workers, there is the GSIS summer-one-month-salary (SOS) loan program for which a total of P8.5 billion has been released; the Patubig and the hybrid rice called "Gloria Rice" which in less image-obsessed climes would have been named after the scientist who developed the strain.

These are all very well. But then truth, like Edgar Allan Poe's tell-tale heart, has a way of beating through the best-laid alibis.

Because anybody who can read will see in the ad itself that most of these wonderful things magically happened only last month, except for Kanan which materialized last October when the President launched her candidacy.

"Down payment *lang ito*," she kept repeating early in her campaign, threatening to pay the rest of the "installments" should she win.

And to add the supreme insult to this most grave injury, she command us, in her most imperious tone, not only to accept all these, but more than that, to reward her with a "clear majority" mandate, because she is our "last best hope." Good grief.

Are we truly an accursed people? Is this the whirlwind we are reaping for removing a legitimate president for sins that pale beside these venalities?

I thought I had long grown up into the age of not believing. Now I have returned to the age of innocence and once more believe in miracles because I must.

"*Walang himala*," said Nora Aunor as Elsa in her famous movie. The miracle is with us. Our vote is our last best hope to emancipate ourselves from this web of duplicity.

I had prayed that Brother Eddie, being younger, would be Raul's Joshua because only he can save us from a false God. But that is not to be. Today, I will go out and vote for Raul Roco.

* * *

Comments to nm19@mysmart.com.ph

Arrested development

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

TODAY, we vote. But even as we cast our ballots and focus on the messy counting to follow, change is taking place. This change goes beyond who in particular will win or lose. It is larger than that. We are experiencing a generational shift, and, in a sense, a return to old ways. We are also entering into a period we should have gone through a generation or so ago, a period of change literally arrested by the onset of martial law.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the first President of the Philippines to have been born a free Filipino, that is, born a citizen of a sovereign Philippines. Of the presidential candidates, three—Ms Macapagal, Panfilo Lacson and Eddie Villanueva—were born free Filipinos. All three vice-presidential candidates were born free Filipinos, too. They have spent the better part of their campaigns appealing to a voting population overwhelmingly younger than they are, generations with no recollection of the Third Republic, and with a hazy appreciation of the martial law era. Those deciding their political fate today includes the generation born during the Edsa Revolution, which is participating in a national election for the first time.

The two older presidential candidates (Fernando Poe Jr. and Raul Roco) are at the end of the road, both politically and in terms of their lives. As sexagenarians, they are senior citizens in our predominantly youthful society. The same applies to the more senior senatorial candidates, particularly Juan Ponce Enrile, Ernesto Maceda and their ilk: they are at the end of the road; this is their last hurrah, their survival—physical and political—can be counted in years, not in decades. They are passing from the scene, and will not be dominating the political landscape for very much longer.

The generation of the First Quarter Storm (born from the 1940s to the early 1960s) is now middle aged. It was poised to take over in the 1970s but Marcos put things on hold, through a system that drove many of its children to the hills, or landed them in prison, or made them join the brain drain. Their hopes for reform through a constitutional convention were dashed; their dreams of revolution crushed. They are our lost generation, and though some are now in power, they are part of a traumatized and at times, cynical generation whose best years are already behind them. Still, they are the successor generation, who will dominate the next decade or so. But by 2010, they, too, will be sexagenarians and poised for retirement.

This leaves those born at the tail end of the baby boomer era and the so-called Generation X (the mid to late 1960s to the late 1970s) to take over, even as they have begun doing so by occupying mid to upper level management positions in the private sector. The problem, of course, is that this is also another lost generation; many of its members have already gone abroad, with so many more preparing to go. This generation, with no memory whatsoever of any time before Marcos, found its political calling with Edsa I in 1986, and came into its own with Edsa Dos. It is still trying to find the secret to turning its ideals into practical realities, either through an unenthusiastic pragmatism (supporting Ms Macapagal), a Quixotic idealism (going for Roco or Villanueva), or right-wing enthusiasm (Lacson). They are among the most virulently anti-Poe.

Indeed, the generational shift can be most clearly seen when it comes to the Poe campaign: even among people in show business, the division in their ranks is more likely than not along generational lines. The show-biz Old Guard is for Poe; younger show-biz personalities are spread among the camps of his opponents.

The supporters of Poe are predominantly from the old Marcos constituency, the ghosts of the KBL machinery, given a new lease on life by Joseph Estrada himself, now a senior citizen. The KBL-Puwersa ng Masa machinery has endured a generation but will not survive a generation more. This also means that the old anti-Marcos coalitions are also dwindling in numbers and relevance as the veterans of the parliament of the streets age and die. We are finally embarking on the post-Marcos era in which politicians are no longer dominated by the Marcos myth.

As I have also pointed out in this column in the past, there are also other shifts taking place. A return to the tendencies and practices of the Third Republic, for example, even if only a minority remember those days. This is a shift that's taken so long because such shifts take decades to occur, but will occur because of the nature of the system to dictate how people behave. The reduction of the presidential campaign this year to a two-person race is an inevitable consequence of the presidential system, and to my mind reinforces the fact that you cannot legislate a two-party system. It will naturally arise, regardless of how many candidates formally run. In the presidential contest in 2010, you might have another two-man race, with two main candidates, even though we will always have many contenders for the position.

Aren't we going parliamentary though? We might, although I think it would be difficult to eliminate the presidency altogether. We might have a presidency with reduced powers, and we just might have federalism: at the very least, we now have a chance to do what we were supposed to have done in 1971. That is, have a proper constitutional convention and write a proper charter relevant to our needs. Even this experiment was stopped by martial law. It is long overdue and we have nothing to lose—and much to gain—by trying it.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Campaign tactics

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THANK God, we're voting today. After 90 long days of intense campaign activities that seem to deteriorate in quality with every election period, the political fate of national and local candidates will finally be decided by the voters.

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against this political exercise. I am proud and happy about it. Not every citizen in the world is given the opportunity to freely choose his leaders. The discomforts we have to go through before and after elections are a small price to pay to enjoy this right.

I will remember this election for the way some candidates tried to use the credibility and reach of the INQUIRER to promote their political ambitions. Not content with paid advertisements (which can be very expensive), many of these wannabes resorted to press releases and letters to the editor to attract attention to themselves.

There is this PR person of a senatorial candidate who sent me several letters giving her client's side on the accusations that came out in another newspaper. She attached copies of a column in that broadsheet that described her candidate as dishonest and corrupt.

When told that the INQUIRER does not, as a matter of policy, print letters that relate to items that did not appear on its pages, she requested that an exception be made for her because "her poor but deserving candidate needs all the help he can get to be elected to the Senate." I almost fell from my seat when she said that. Mercifully, she stopped bugging me after three attempts.

Considering the volume of "praise" releases and letters that this column and other sections of the newspapers received during the campaign period, I can imagine how many trees had to be cut to meet their paper requirements. There must be other means of soliciting votes without harming our environment.

Black propaganda

This column was bombarded by accusations and counter-accusations by people who identified themselves as supporters of either Noli de Castro or Loren Legarda who are both running for vice president.

My e-mail box groaned from the lengthy letters—which had thick attachments—they sent me to document the charges of corruption and misuse of public funds against the candidates. Some of the letter senders expressed their willingness to come to the INQUIRER office to submit their sworn statements and evidence on condition that a news report will be written about them.

To give a semblance of spontaneity and objectivity to the e-mail, they were made to appear as coming from different addresses and at varying times of the week. But it was obvious from the way they were written and sent that they were all orchestrated.

A reader representing one camp tried to do a reverse psychology on me. He said that if the newspaper does not give publicity to his "well documented exposé" it would show that the INQUIRER is partial to the other political party and not the unbiased reporter of events it claims to be.

With some variation in wordings, this is the favorite line of readers who think the public should not be deprived of the opportunity to read the product of their intellectual and literary genius.

When the barrage of e-mail from the De Castro and Legarda camps reached irritating proportions (one letter was sent 20 times in one day), I felt it was time for effective virus control. I placed the e-mail addresses from where the letters came from in my computer's blacklist, with instructions to delete them the moment they try to get in. Since then, I was spared a lot of aggravation.

Fake survey

The campaign tactic that really takes the cake is the survey on voters' preferences that the INQUIRER allegedly conducted in a municipality in the southern part of Metro Manila.

A month after the official campaign for local positions started, I got a call from somebody who reported that a document showing the results of that survey was circulating in his place. The faxed copy sent to me carried the words "Extra Extra" at the top of the page. Below it were written "Survey by Philippine Daily Inquirer."

The names of the candidates for congressman, mayor, vice mayor and councilor were listed. Beside their names were the percentages of votes they allegedly got from the survey respondents.

The caller refused to identify himself for, according to him, security reasons. When I told him that the INQUIRER is not in the business of conducting surveys and has not done anything of that nature before, he suggested that the newspaper come out with an announcement denying the authenticity of the survey and the results.

I rejected the proposal outright. I felt the publicity will only dignify what was clearly a scam being foisted on the voters of that municipality. Besides, I had a sneaky feeling that the caller was acting on behalf of the supposedly front runners in the survey.

Even if the INQUIRER denied the veracity of the survey, I'm sure the "winning candidates" will twist the story and give it a slant that is favorable to their interests. Politicians are not lacking in expertise in this area.

Persistent

I thought that was the last time I would hear from the caller. I was wrong. Two weeks later, he called again to send me a copy of the results of the latest survey that the INQUIRER supposedly conducted in his town. He stressed the need for the newspaper to publicly disclaim any involvement in the survey.

I did not budge from my earlier position. I added that considering the number of interesting news reports begging to be published, it would be difficult for the newspaper to allocate space to that non-story. The caller must have been a picture of dejection when he got off the phone.

I have other stories to tell about the fast ones that some candidates tried to do on the INQUIRER during the election campaign. But I'll reserve them for the future when the right opportunity comes.

These incidents show the imaginativeness or creativity of some Filipinos in going after their objectives, especially if they are political in nature. If only the same ability or talent can be put to use in more productive endeavors.

In the meantime, go out and vote! You owe it to our country, yourself and your children to exercise that right.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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What matters most today

WE have heard our candidates talk of their platforms of government. As we are deluged with various competing concerns of the day, have we ever stopped and thought, even for a while, what really matters to us the most?

There is still time to think, choose and decide on whom to vote. Inside the polling booth, it will only be you and your conscience.

As a working mother of five kids (ages 4-13 years old), I'll bet my 10 cents' worth of wisdom that it all boils down to food—adequate, safe and nutritious food that is accessible and affordable to satisfy our need.

In one affair I recently attended, I was saddened to learn that about 3.5 million of our pre-school children are malnourished, while one-third of our entire population is anemic. The stark reality is that many Filipinos are eating less than they used to or worse, they go to bed with empty stomachs.

Why should we be alarmed? With their empty stomachs, how can our kids grow normally, perform well in school, pursue their dreams and survive the seemingly endless pressures of their environment? Most of us are parents. We only want the best for our children. And the best for them starts with proper nourishment of their bodies.

We need **leaders** who can help us fulfill and protect this fundamental right of our children to adequate food. We can achieve this today. Let us all think **food** and vote **wisely**.

—LUPE T. PAMBUAN,
Morning Breeze Subd.,
Caloocan City

Restorative justice, not death penalty

IT is an alarming trend that in Davao City alone, as reported in the media, there have been more than 200 victims of summary execution from 2001 up to the present. Allegedly perpetrated by the Davao Death Squad, no one until now has been arrested and stands trial in court for the gruesome murders.

In my personal view, a summary execution is just like imposing death penalty on criminal suspects without court proceedings. The Death penalty is no deterrent to crime. What prevents people from committing crimes is the certainty of apprehension, speedy prosecution and, if warranted, conviction.

I am against death penalty, I am in favor of restorative justice.

—RITA M. MELECIO,
regional coordinator,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines
Northern/Southern Mindanao,
219 Ponce corner Aurora Sts.,
Davao City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Former senator's call revisited

SEN. Francisco S. Tatad is, for once, correct. In his "Call to Moral Revolution," a privilege speech delivered Jan. 22, 1996 on the floor of the Philippine Senate, the good senator intoned, "We must realize, once and for all, that the governance of the nation is serious business. It must never be surrendered, willingly, to the morally and intellectually unfit.... Neither must it be left to those who have no wish to learn the distinction between public office and box office, between statecraft and show biz."

The good senator's call is most apt today. We urge the nation to join him, for once, in his most timely call.

—ROLANDO L. VILLONES,
1510 Citiland 10 Tower 1,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Inspired by God?

WHAT can you say about religious groups like the Iglesia ni Cristo and El Shaddai which have in past elections endorsed, supported and helped dishonest, immoral and simply evil candidates get elected? Does God inspire the leaders of these groups as they claim? I don't think so.

If I were a member of any of these groups, I would question the integrity and intelligence of the leaders and, more importantly, their claim that they are God's messengers. God's people shun or reject evil. Anybody who supports evil people embraces evil. Think about it.

—NAZARIO DE JESUS,
Makati City

Betrayal of the Filipino veteran

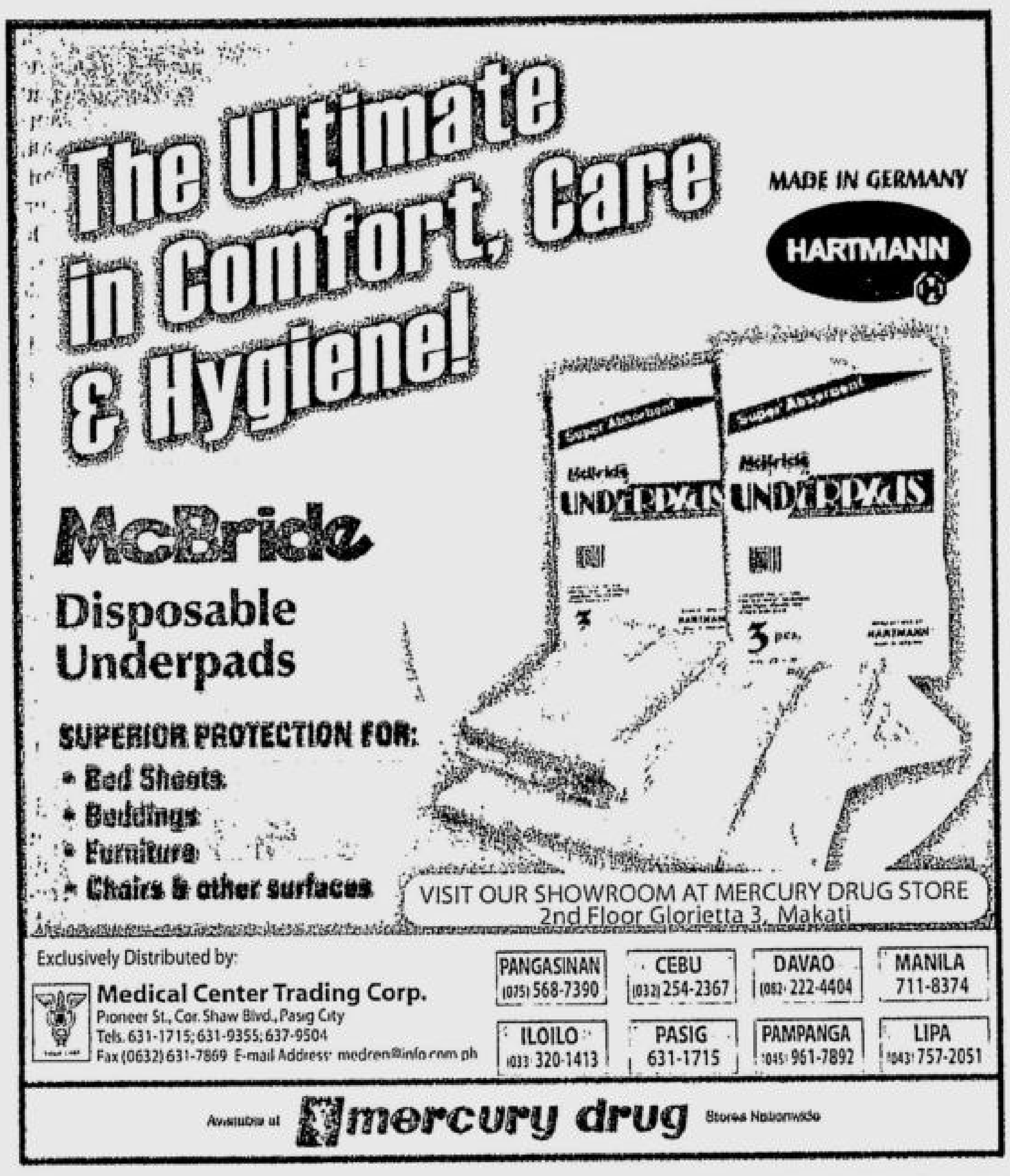
AS a 79-year-old American veteran of World War II who served three years in the United States 15th Air Force in Europe (1943-1945), I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus of disgust over the continued betrayal of World War II Filipino veterans by the US government.

These brave men fought the Japanese, and many of them died alongside American soldiers. Thousands died during the infamous Bataan Death March. Today, the ranks of the few survivors are being decimated by time.

Isn't it time for the US Congress to honor the pledge of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who promised equality for the Filipino soldiers if they fought with America?

This letter is a protest against the dishonorable course of inaction being carried on for almost half a century by the US government.

—NORMAN PESKIN,
P.O. Box 444, Greenhills,
Metro Manila 1502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Educating Ibay on Makati City's projects

MAY we clarify some statements of Councilor Oscar Ibay, which were reported in an INQUIRER news item. (PDI, 5/2/04)

Ibay was either misinformed or was not telling the truth when he stated that despite the "yellow card" program, Makati residents have to pay for their own medicine and medical equipment. It was never the intention of the "yellow card" program to provide free medicine and medical equipment to beneficiaries.

The Makati Health Program, known in Makati as the "yellow card" program, is aimed at subsidizing hospitalization and medical services at the Makati Medical Center. The program covers residents with monthly incomes not exceeding P10,000. Also covered by the program are the city's elderly and government employees, including public school teachers, policemen and firemen. To date, we have 310,320 yellow card holders.

For 17 years, the yellow card program has given beneficiaries the opportunity to receive medical services at the Makati Medical Center at only a fraction of the usual cost. These are services which are normally beyond the reach of low-income residents.

To complement the program, we have also extended medical insurance, through PhilHealth, to indigent Makati families. May we emphasize though that the PhilHealth coverage started during the administration of President Joseph Estrada. To date, there are 20,742 PhilHealth beneficiaries fully sponsored by the Makati government.

It was erroneous for Ibay to say that the Ospital ng Makati (Osmak) "has no equipment, so people have to pay for their medical expenses in different clinics." Let me assure the public that Osmak has the necessary medical equipment, otherwise the Department of Health and the Philippine College of Emergency Medicine would not have allowed it to operate. One of Osmak's recent acquisitions —a hemodialysis unit—is his basis for spreading the lie that the mayor is suffering from a kidney ailment, when in fact the mayor is physically fit.

Ibay also claimed that the city government has no housing program. As councilor, Ibay should be aware that Makati has two existing housing projects in Tejeros and Rizal for around 900 low-income families; that it has in line two other major housing projects—the high-rise condominiums on Kalayaan Avenue in Barangay Cembo and at the Macda compound along JP Rizal Street in West Rembo; and has initiated talks with the national government for the purchase of the Guadalupe Bliss Housing project. These projects will have over 4,000 residential units, aside from commercial and recreational spaces.

The City Council was given a briefing on the plan by the project's consultants. Ibay was either absent or not paying attention.

—JOSELITO SJ SALGADO,
officer in charge,
Information and Community
Relations Department,
Makati City

Bong Coo's feats

MICHAEL Lim Ubac erred when he wrote that Bong Coo won four World Bowling titles and that she's been listed in the Guinness Book of World Records. (PDI, 5/3/04) Fact is, it was Paeng Nepomuceno who accomplished that feat, not Coo.

But yes, she's got a World Cup title and two World Championships gold medals (1979) apart from several other bowling titles. Along with Nepomuceno, Coo has also been enshrined in the World Bowling Writers International Hall of Fame based in St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

—LOI LANDICHO,
3/F Jacinta Bldg. 2,
Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City

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	2.00-5.00	M-F	May31-Jun17
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun19-Aug07
Auto Body Electrical P3,600/48hrs	2.00-5.00	M-F	May31-Jun21
	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun21
Gas Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	May31-Jun25
	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun25
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul31
Diesel Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	2.00-5.00	M-F	May31-Jun25
	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun25
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul31
Basic Car Maintenance P2,800/30hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	May31-Jun11
	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun11
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Automatic Transmission Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	May31-Jun25
Electronic Fuel Injection Servicing P4,200/48hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	May31-Jun21
Underchassis Mechanic P3,900/60hrs	2.00-5.00	M-F	May31-Jun25

ELECTRONICS

Basic Electronics P3,900/36hrs	8.00-12.00	M-Th	May24-Jun07
	8.00-12.00	MTTh	Jun14-Jun28
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	May24-Jun07
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	Jun14-Jun28
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Microcomputer Hardware Fundamentals P4,300/36hrs	8.00-12.00	MWTh	May24-Jun10
	8.00-12.00	MWTh	Jun14-Jul01
	5.00-8.30	M-Th	May24-Jun07
	8.00-5.00	Fri	May28-Jun25
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P4,500/35hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	May24-Jun07
	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Jun14-Jun28
	1.30-5.00	W&Th	May26-Jun23
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Advanced Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P4,500/35hrs	6:30-9.00	M-Th	May24-Jun07
	8:00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Television & Monitor Servicing P3,900/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May24-Jun08
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Jun14-Jun29
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Practical CellularPhone Servicing P4,800/27hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May24-Jun03
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Jun14-Jun24
Home Video Editing P3,300/16hrs	8.00-12.00	Sun	Jun06-Jun27

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Office 2000 (MSWord, MSExcel, MSPowerPoint) P8,000/48hrs	8.30-11.30	M-Th	Jun21-Jul12
	6.00-9.00	M-F	Jun14-Jul05
	6.00-9.00	M-F	Jul12-Aug02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun19-Jul24
Program Logic Formulation P5,000/30hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	May31-Jun15
	6.00-9.00	M-Th	May31-Jun15
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Jun21-Jul06
	9.30-4.30	Sun	May30-Jun27
Visual Basic.Net Fundamentals P8,500/45hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Jun14-Jul07
	6.00-9.00	M-Th	Jun14-Jul07
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun26-Jul31
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Jun27-Aug01
Programming In C++ P6,500/36hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	May31-Jun17
	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Jun21-Jul08
	6.00-9.00	M-Th	Jun21-Jul08
	3.30-8.30	Sat	May29-Jul03
	9.30-4.30	Sun	May30-Jul04
Object Oriented Programming in C++ P6,500/36 hrs	8.00-3.00	Sat	May29-Jun26
JAVA Programming Fundamentals P7,500/42hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	May24-Jun15
	6.00-9.00	M-Th	May24-Jun15
	8.00-3.00	Sat	Jul03-Aug14
	8.00-3.00	Sun	Jul04-Aug15
Developing Applications in JAVA P7,500/42hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	May31-Jun22
	3.30-8.30	Sat	Jul03-Aug14
Introduction to Oracle 9i SQL P10,000/48 hrs.	5.00-9.00	MTThF	May24-Jun18
	9.00-4.00	M&T	May24-Jun15
	9.00-4.00	W&Th	Jun09-Jul01
	8.00-5.00	Sat	May29-Jul03
Network Technology P7,000/45hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	May24-Jun16
	6.00-9.00	M-Th	May24-Jun16
	10.00-5.00	M-Th	May24-Jun03
	9.00-4.00	Sat	Jun26-Aug14
	9.00-4.00	Sun	Jun13-Aug01
Linux System Administration (Linux+) P8,200/45hrs	8.00-5.00	MTThF	May17-May25
	8.00-5.00	MTThF	Jun03-Jun11
	8.00-6.00	MTThF	Jun21-Jun29
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun19-Jul24
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Jun13-Jul18
Linux Network Administration P5,500/30hrs	5.30-8.30	MTThF	May10-May25
	5.30-8.30	MTThF	May27-Jun01
	8.00-5.00	MTThF	May27-Jun01
	8.00-5.00	MTThF	Jun14-Jun18
CISCO 1 P8,000/70hrs	1.00-5.00	M&F	May10-Jul09
CISCO 2 P8,000/70hrs	1.00-5.00	T&W	May11-Jul07
	9.00-4.00	Wed	Jun02-Aug18
CISCO 3 P8,000/70hrs	5.30-9.00	T&F	May18-Jul09
CISCO 4 P8,000/70hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	May24-Jul01

APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES

Enhancing Communication Skills P3,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Creating Preventive Maintenance Systems P3,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Customer Service P3,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Training Preparation & Animation P3,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Change Management P5,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Human Resource Development P5,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Organization Development P5,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19
Technology Management P5,000/21hrs	9.00-6.00	Sat	May29-Jun19

INSTRUMENTATION

Pneumatic Ind'l Controls P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun18
Electro-Pneumatics P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Jun21-Jul09
	8.00-4.00	Sun	May30-Jul04
Basic PLC P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun18
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Jun21-Jul09
	8.00-4.00	Sat	May29-Jul03
Calibration for Process Instrumentation P4,200/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun18
	9.00-4.00	Sat	May29-Jul03
Industrial Process Controls Instrumentation P4,200/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Jun21-Jul09
Process Automation Course P7,500/72hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jul09
Machine Automation Course P10,800/126hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jul30

ELECTRICAL

Industrial Electrician P4,500/66hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	8.00-5.30	Sat	Jun19-Aug07
	8.00-5.30	Sun	Jun20-Aug08
Building Wiring Installation and Maintenance P4,500/90hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul13
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul13
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun19-Aug07
Electrical Control Wiring Installation and Troubleshooting P4,500/48hrs	6.30-8.30	M-Th	Jun07-Jul07
	8.00-5.00	Sat	May29-Jul10
Motor &Trans. Rewinding P4,500/60hrs	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul13
	8.00-5.00	Sat	May29-Jul24
AutoCAD 2000 P4,800/72hrs	9.00-12.30	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Jun07-Jul15
	8.00-6.00	Sat	Jun19-Aug14
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Jun20-Aug15
Advanced Ind'l. Motor Control P4,500/60hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Jun07-Jul13
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun19-Aug07

MECHANICAL

Lathe Machine Operation P7,000/40hrs	5.00-9.00	MTThF	May31-Jun15
	8.00-6.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Milling Machine Operation P7,000/40hrs	5.00-9.00	MTThF	May31-Jun15
	8.00-6.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Basic CAD/CAM P4,500/40hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun18
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
CNC Milling Programming P4,500/40hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun16
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03
Gas Welding Cutting & Brazing P5,500/40hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	May31-Jun16
	8.00-6.00	Sat	Jun05-Jul03

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Danger sign

TODAY is e-day, that is, election day, a historical-political juncture that not even savants can fortell. The strategists of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will not tell us, but the spin on "a two-cornered fight between GMA and FPJ," which they successfully peddled to the public and the media, could backfire and set adrift the whole nation after the last vote shall have been canvassed.

Amid the plurality of voices, which at best only serve as a cacophonic counterpoint to the media spin on "a two-cornered fight," the best and idealistic minds are lulled, dazed and unable to command action. This is a danger sign that we might be leaving the thinking and the doing to the anarchists and the dark forces who are bent on turning back the hands of time.

The electoral surveys, with the help of the media, may have effectively quelled the lingering flame of romance of many responsible Filipinos who, even with second thoughts, pinned their hopes on two or three other candidates, not without a reason. The media spin on a "two-cornered fight" was ruthless in driving home its point—that presidential elections are for bullies with mammoth resources to spend. What happens now if the majority of Filipinos come to the conclusion that the glitter that is left of the May elections is just the glitter of a nova star that is already dead?

—PEDRITO B. DELA CRUZ,
San Roque,
Paombong, Bulacan

Of Doronila and other Inquirer columnists

AT LAST, in the aftermath of the mammoth Luneta rally, Amando Doronila, after dismissing Bro. Eddie Villanueva outright as a religious zealot, admits he is the top contender for the presidency. (PDI, 5/7/04)

Harnessed to keep Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the epitome of rotten and oppressive politics, in power, Doronila says that Brother Eddie is "relying on a born-again Christian constituency to shoulder him on to Malacañang." Doesn't he read the INQUIRER? Brother Eddie is supported by born-again Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Mormons, etc.

The "INC's and El Shaddai's constituencies are larger than those of Brother Eddie's Bangon Pilipinas." Does he even understand the word "constituency"? Or is he deliberately using his glibness to sow bias against Brother Eddie in the people's minds? I say he is.

"Opinion surveys place him last in the field..." Only people like him blindly believe in the purity of this election's surveys.

"... Many dismiss Villanueva as a political fluke." Many? I can think of a handful. Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon, for one, would rather keep the corruption and poisoning of the national soul by the *trapos* than lose her "freedom and passion." Or Belinda Olivares-Cunanan who extols every smell and color of GMA and Noli de Castro.

Don't you realize, sirs and ma'ams, this is the biggest chance we've had for national renewal? Bigger than what Ninoy Aquino's death gave us?

A former radical activist, able manager, economics professor, a former UP law student, jailed during martial law, Brother Eddie is a man who understands the machinations of politicians. Yet he dismisses him right away.

Doronila says Brother Eddie "claims to be a regent of the state-owned PUP.." It's very clear, he never bothered to know Brother Eddie and his platform.

Brother Eddie "seeks to seize the high moral ground from Ms Macapagal." GMA on high moral ground? Only a pseudo-opinion maker or a paid hack would write a thing like that.

"The middle classes are fully aware that Villanueva does not have a ghost of a chance to win the presidency." Conditioning the people's minds, just like the dubious surveys.

"Villanueva is no better than peasant leaders of millenarian movements which had led to peasant revolts." He could not think of a more apt comparison? Those were armed revolts for Christ's sake!

The middle classes "are tragic because they want change without blood and to avoid bloodshed, they seek refuge behind the safe mantle of messianism." It appears Doronila prefers bloody revolutions to peaceful ones.

Why write about Brother Eddie only now? Have the roars of disenchantment reached his plugged ears finally? Did he feel a need, watching the Bangon Luneta rally, to save his distressful damsel in disguise?

Do I see the fangs of Malacañang in all of this? Has their lethal venom seeped into the veins of my favorite newspaper?

—PEN MEDINA,
126-A Stanford, Cubao, Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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THESE MASKS of at least four presidential candidates were developed by mask maker EV Espiritu to depict the shallow presidential campaign that transpired in the last four months. VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Comelec, PNP scored for inaction over complaints of vote-buying

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Also on Sunday at past 11 a.m., Mexico Mayor Ernesto Punzalan and former Mayor Ferdinand Meneses, who is supporting mayoral bet Teddy Tumang, engaged in a fistfight over the delivery of the goods.

Meneses' group had been monitoring the deliveries since Saturday night.

Fistfight

Meneses claimed that it was Punzalan who started the fistfight and fired a gun. The former mayor reported that policemen from the Regional Mobile Group accompanied Punzalan.

Punzalan declined to comment when contacted by the INQUIRER. The incident triggered tension in the town and policemen were put on red alert.

Former Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo, who is running for mayor in San Fernando and whose son Eric is Aquino's rival, called as "absolute lies" the accusations of Aquino and Meneses that the Domingos were behind the vote-buying incidents.

She said it was Aquino and another mayoral candidate Eligio Lagman who gave out grocery packs in Barangay Panlumacan and Paralaya.

Eric said Aquino's supporters have been "giving out P500 to people in Arayat and Sta. Ana since Saturday."

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In Nueva Ecija, additional policemen were sent to Sta. Rosa and Jaen towns to prevent the possible outbreak of election-related violence.

Emmanuel Ignacio, acting provincial election supervisor, said there are indications that last Friday's bombing in Sta. Rosa town would be repeated. He said their reports indicated that the bombing was carried out by followers of a local politician.

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Prayer

In Nueva Vizcaya, Senior Supt. Felix Caddali, provincial police director, said they had launched a daily prayer for a violence-free election in the province.

"We are doing this seriously to ask for Divine intervention so that there would not be any incident of election violence, unlike in other places where intense conflicts occur," the police director said.

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On Sunday, Reynante Hernando, provincial election assistant, said more than 1,600 ballots were still lacking in Dupax del Norte and Alfonso Castañeda towns.

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"The pressure is too much sometimes. All we need is understanding. When a voter cannot find his name in the list of voters, for instance, he should talk to the teachers nicely," he said.

In Mt. Province, Supt. Rodolfo Anagaran, provincial police director, said the tension between warring tribes in Barangays Saclit and Poblacion in Sadanga town had delayed the delivery of ballot boxes and other election paraphernalia there.

More troops

Anagaran said they asked officials of the provincial police to send additional men to Sadanga to prevent a clash between warring tribes during today's polls.

In Bontoc town, officials of the party-list group Bayan Muna seized anti-Bayan Muna pamphlets from a policeman on Friday.

Anagaran said they are closely watching Barangay Mainit in Bontoc, Tanduan in Besao, Aguid in Sagada, Betwagan and Belwang in Sadanga, and Fidelisan and Pide in Sagada where communist rebels are known to be operating. *Tonette Orejas, Anselmo Roque, Jun Malig, Cesar Villa and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Melvin Gascon, Delmar Carino and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

11-hour brownout hits 10 Misamis Oriental towns

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—At least 10 towns in Misamis Oriental and Talakag in Bukidnon experienced an 11-hour power blackout that started around 12:45 a.m. yesterday.

But the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) ruled out sabotage in the incident and instead pointed to technical problems as the cause of the blackout that hit the areas.

Rufino Magbanua, chief of Transco's corporate communications, told the INQUIRER that technical problems hit the 75 MVA (megavolt amperes) transformer in Lugait, Misamis Oriental.

Magbanua said the problem affected the 69 Kilovolt line supplying power to parts of the province and Bukidnon.

He said the transformer is now being examined to determine what caused the malfunction.

He said to thwart attempts to sabotage power lines and transformers, the Transco had coordinated with the military, which readily deployed soldiers to secure power facilities.

Their substations in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental and Kibawe, Bukidnon were being secured by soldiers under the 8th Infantry Battalion, he said.

Magbanua said to ensure that electrical systems in the balloting and counting centers are in good condition, Transco and technical personnel from electric cooperatives went around on Saturday.

He said one of the things they made sure was that electrical systems in these vital centers would not malfunction.

Magbanua said electric cooperatives would also deploy "line gangs or patrol teams" to address power supply problems.

Transco, he said, also established at least 10 satellite command centers in Northcentral Mindanao so that "technical problems could be acted out right away."

"In case of power failure due to natural causes, we also have laid contingency measures and need not wait for the power providers like the electric cooperatives to act on it. We would send out our team immediately," he said. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

7 rebels, goons slain in Masbate

MASBATE CITY—Seven members of suspected New People's Army and a private armed group were killed in an encounter with Masbate police and soldiers of the 22nd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Lagta, Baleno, Masbate at about 2 p.m., yesterday.

Col. Ramon Santos, 901st Infantry Brigade commander, said the names of the victims were not yet available as of press time as the government troops were still pursuing the two groups.

He said there was no casualty on the government side.

Santos said the police and military men led by certain SSgt. Duevo and SSgt. Rural also recovered two M-16 rifles, one baby Armalite, one Uzi, one Ingram and two shotguns from the clash site.

Masbate is one of two Bicol provinces placed under the control of the Commission on Elections due to the presence of NPA rebels and private armed groups.

Chief Supt. Jaime Lasar, Bicol police chief, said the encounter was a result of the government's intensified drive to contain the increasing election-related violent incidents in the island-province.

The other Sunday night, after almost a month that her sister, who is running for a congressional seat, survived an ambush, gubernatorial candidate Fausto Seachon and his group were ambushed in Barangay San Vicente, Kawayan, Masbate, resulting in the killing of a candidate for councilor in Uson town and the wounding of four others.

Earlier, two suspected members of a private armed group and one rebel were killed while six others were arrested by the military in separate encounters in Claveria and Milagros towns, also in Masbate.

Rey Sabado, a resident of Makati City, died on the spot when his group fought it out with elements of the 65th Infantry Battalion led by Capt. Bienvenido Alabot at around 9:30 a.m., Sunday last week, in Barangay Penafrancia, Claveria.

Masbate police chief Senior Supt. Roque Ramirez said Alabot's unit arrested Sabado's six companions.

Ramirez said the government troops recovered from the scene four M-16 rifles with one attached M203, one M-14 rifle, one shotgun, eleven M-16 rifles with 300 live ammunitions, three ammunitions for M203, one bandolier, four long magazines for M-16 rifle with 110 rounds of ammunitions.

Authorities said this was a result of a clash between two warring political groups in Barangay Taguilid, Claveria, Masbate. *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Remullas expect opposition loss

CALAMBA CITY—A few hours after presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo Lacson hosted his supposed victory party in a hotel in Makati, the tough cop-turned-politician yesterday lost the trust of one of his staunchest supporters in his bailiwick Cavite.

Cavite Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla disclosed that the Remulla clan, considered the single most influential clan in the province, had thrown in the towel as they predicted Lacson's defeat to President Macapagal-Arroyo in the presidential race.

Remulla said they would no longer press their people and supporters to vote for Lacson and would just let them vote for whomever they think as the most capable leader of the country.

Despite their "loss of confidence" in their provincemate, Remulla said their family would still be supporting Lacson.

He said no matter what happens, Lacson would still win "hands down in Cavite."

"We're not dropping him for anybody. What we are saying is that the victory of the opposition is now impossible because of the continued state of disunity within the opposition. But we're confident Lacson would still win hands down in our province," Remulla told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

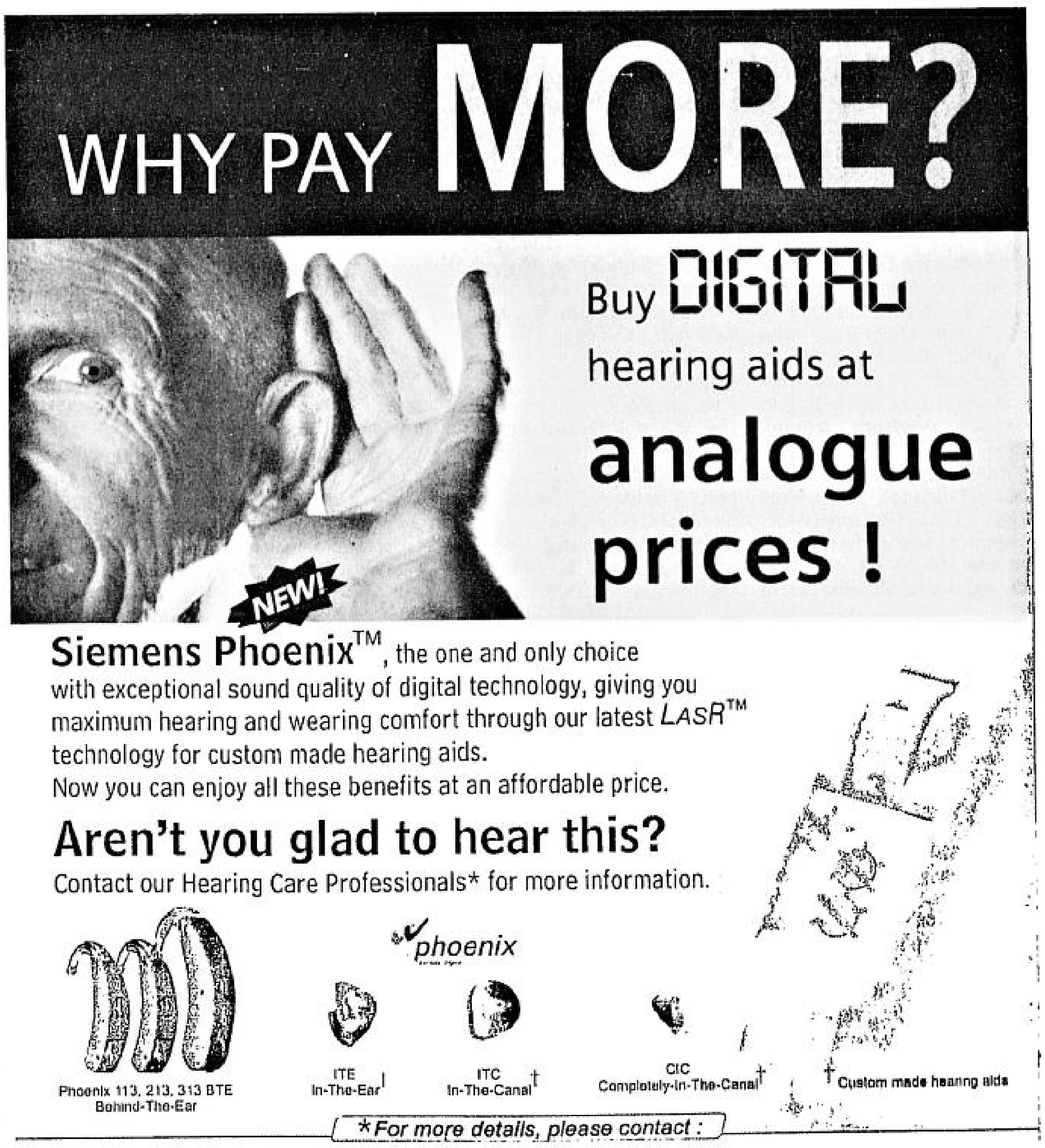
"*Hindi na lang namin siya ididiin sa tao namin* and we'll let them choose *kung sino iboboto nila*," he said.

He claimed the success of Ms Macapagal would be "irreversible" now that most of the voters are getting into the "electoral bandwagon" which, he said, has virtually given the mandate to the President.

He noted the recent surveys which showed Ms Macapagal pulling away inch by inch from closest rival Fernando Poe Jr. of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Asked why the Remullas decided to tell the public about their decision, he said: "Well our family just wanted to have a constructive relationship with the President as she would clearly sit again in Malacañang."

Asked if they had indeed switched to Ms Macapagal, Remulla answered: "No, not necessarily. Switching camps is a different thing." *Marlon B. Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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Florentino Awingan, Department of Education district supervisor in La Trinidad town, said teachers are criticized a lot when lapses, delays or mistakes happen inside the election precincts.

"The pressure is too much sometimes. All we need is understanding. When a voter cannot find his name in the list of voters, for instance, he should talk to the teachers nicely," he said.

In Mt. Province, Supt. Rodolfo Anagaran, provincial police director, said the tension between warring tribes in Barangays Saclit and Poblacion in Sadanga town had delayed the delivery of ballot boxes and other election paraphernalia there.

More troops

Anagaran said they asked officials of the provincial police to send additional men to Sadanga to prevent a clash between warring tribes during today's polls.

In Bontoc town, officials of the party-list group Bayan Muna seized anti-Bayan Muna pamphlets from a policeman on Friday.

Anagaran said they are closely watching Barangay Mainit in Bontoc, Tanduan in Besao, Aguid in Sagada, Betwagan and Belwang in Sadanga, and Fidelisan and Pide in Sagada where communist rebels are known to be operating. *Tonette Orejas, Anselmo Roque, Jun Malig, Cesar Villa and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Melvin Gascon, Delmar Carino and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Remullas expect opposition loss

CALAMBA CITY—A few hours after presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo Lacson hosted his supposed victory party in a hotel in Makati, the tough cop-turned-politician yesterday lost the trust of one of his staunchest supporters in his bailiwick Cavite.

Cavite Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla disclosed that the Remulla clan, considered the single most influential clan in the province, had thrown in the towel as they predicted Lacson's defeat to President Macapagal-Arroyo in the presidential race.

Remulla said they would no longer press their people and supporters to vote for Lacson and would just let them vote for whomever they think as the most capable leader of the country.

Despite their "loss of confidence" in their provincemate, Remulla said their family would still be supporting Lacson.

He said no matter what happens, Lacson would still win "hands down in Cavite."

"We're not dropping him for anybody. What we are saying is that the victory of the opposition is now impossible because of the continued state of disunity within the opposition. But we're confident Lacson would still win hands down in our province," Remulla told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

"*Hindi na lang namin siya ididiin sa tao namin* and we'll let them choose *kung sino iboboto nila*," he said.

He claimed the success of Ms Macapagal would be "irreversible" now that most of the voters are getting into the "electoral bandwagon" which, he said, has virtually given the mandate to the President.

He noted the recent surveys which showed Ms Macapagal pulling away inch by inch from closest rival Fernando Poe Jr. of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Asked why the Remullas decided to tell the public about their decision, he said: "Well our family just wanted to have a constructive relationship with the President as she would clearly sit again in Malacañang."

Asked if they had indeed switched to Ms Macapagal, Remulla answered: "No, not necessarily. Switching camps is a different thing." *Marlon B. Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

11-hour brownout hits 10 Misamis Oriental towns

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—At least 10 towns in Misamis Oriental and Talakag in Bukidnon experienced an 11-hour power blackout that started around 12:45 a.m. yesterday.

But the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) ruled out sabotage in the incident and instead pointed to technical problems as the cause of the blackout that hit the areas.

Rufino Magbanua, chief of Transco's corporate communications, told the Inquirer that technical problems hit the 75 MVA (megavolt amperes) transformer in Lugait, Misamis Oriental.

Magbanua said the problem affected the 69 Kilovolt line supplying power to parts of the province and Bukidnon.

He said the transformer is now being examined to determine what caused the malfunction.

He said to thwart attempts to sabotage power line and transformers, the Transco had coordinated with the military, which readily deployed soldiers to secure power facilities.

[illegible] ental and Kibawe, Bukidnon were being secured by soldiers under the 8th Infantry Battalion, he said.

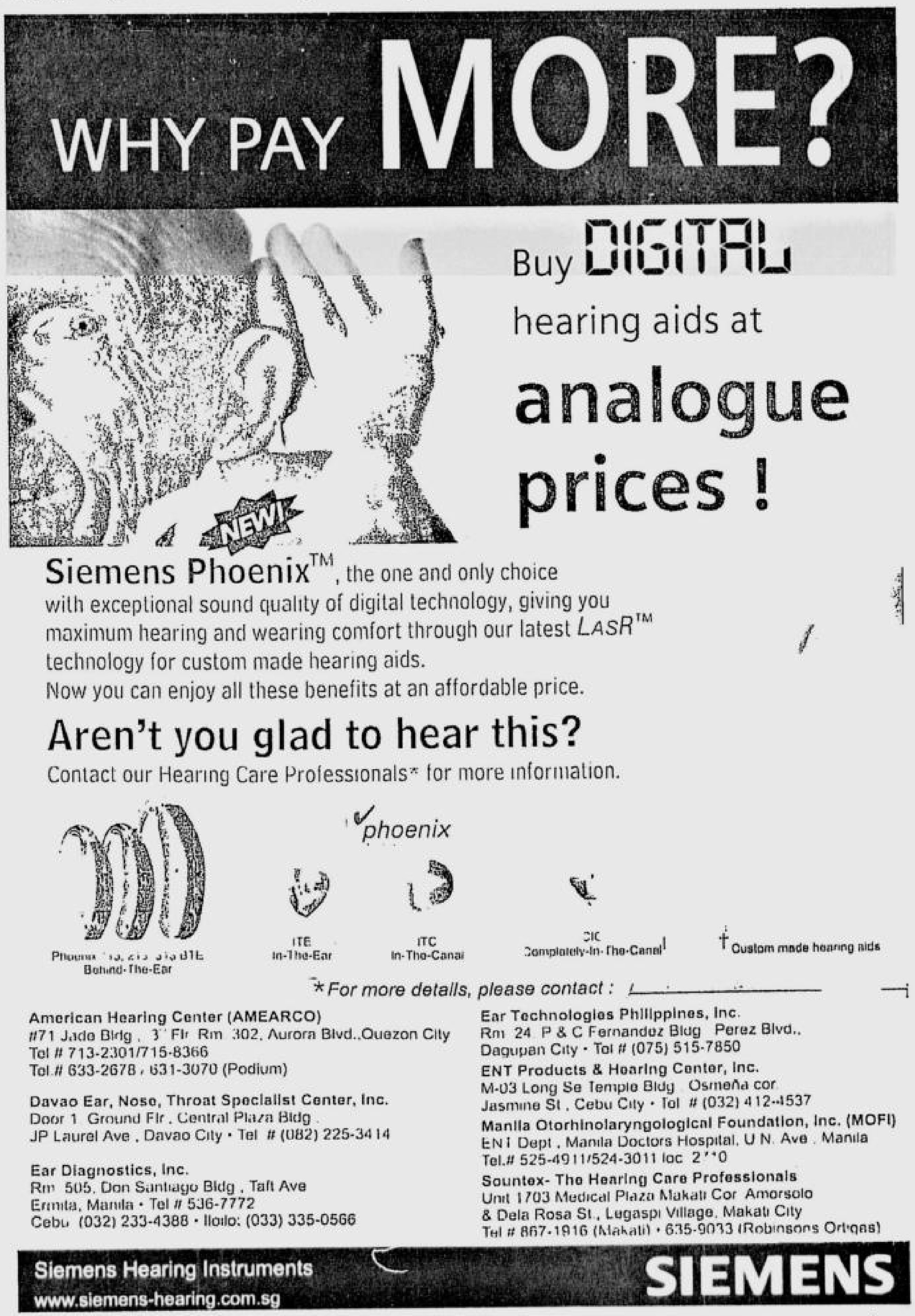
Magbanua said to ensure that electrical systems in the balloting and counting centers are in good condition, Transco and technical personnel from electric cooperatives went around on Saturday.

He said one of the things they made sure was that electrical systems in these vital centers would not malfunction.

Magbanua said electric cooperatives would also deploy "line gangs or patrol teams" to address power supply problems.

Transco, he said, also established at least 10 satellite command centers in Northcentral Mindanao so that "technical problems could be acted out right away."

"In case of power failure due to natural causes, we also have laid contingency measures and need not wait for the power providers like the electric cooperatives to act on it. We would send out our team immediately," he said. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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"We want to assure the public that we will hit hard on those who violate the law and that we're doing our best to protect their interests. We know that elections here in Cavite is hotly contested, that's why we want to complement our forces," Rosales told the INQUIRER.

Despite his assurance, residents and other candidates of Trece Martires raised doubts on the capability of the police to maintain peace and order in the city. *Cristina Arzadon, Villamor Visaya Jr. and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

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SAN FERNANDO CITY—The daughter of reelectionist La Union Rep. Tomas Dumpit is no longer a candidate for mayor of Agoo town.

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The petitioners—Agoo residents Carlos Boado, Rogelio de Vera, Fernando Calonge, Benito Carrera and Domingo Calonge—claimed that Michelena was not a resident of Agoo and that her address in her certificate of candidacy, Barangay San Julian West, Agoo, was "false."

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She had presented a deed of absolute sale of a property in the town and affidavits of her supposed neighbors, among other things, as proof of residency.

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As a result of the en banc resolution, reelectionist Mayor Eufranio Eriguel is now unopposed in Agoo, bringing to six the number of mayoral candidates running alone in La Union.

Augmentation teams from police and military forces had also been sent in Agoo and in four other "probable areas of concern."

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In Pampanga, the Comelec law department, through lawyer Alioden Dalaig, ordered the election officer in Mabalacat to disregard the May 7 directive to remove the name of Mayor Marino Morales in the certified list of mayoral candidates in the town.

Dalaig said Morales should be allowed to run for mayor because the Comelec's decision to disqualify him "has not yet become final and executory." *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, with a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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LUCENA CITY—Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal gave his assurance that the New People's Army would not interfere in today's elections even after the Communist Party of the Philippines had expressed the belief that the political exercise offers no hope to the people and would only maintain the unjust social system.

"All NPA units will remain inside the guerrilla zones and just monitor the proceedings in other areas through mobile phones. My office will monitor the election from several radio stations with election coverage," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

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"On the contrary, some of the NPA units will help maintain peace and order in the vicinity of polling places inside our controlled areas. They will watch from a distance," he said.

Rosal said the NPA members were tasked with observing the movement of candidates who will break election laws, such as vote-buying and resorting to "dirty tricks."

In an earlier statement, the CPP said the elections offered no hope to the people and that "only by waging a protracted people's war will the country establish national freedom, democracy, lasting peace and progress."

"Like all other reactionary elections in the history of the puppet republic, the May 10 polls serve only to perpetuate the ruling political system and create an illusion of democracy. These elections can neither express the will of the people nor be the means of selecting leaders that will truly represent the people's interests," the CPP said.

Defensive

However, Rosal stressed that all guerrilla units would strictly maintain a "defensive mode" to thwart any possible attacks from the military.

According to the police and military, the communist guerrillas have emerged as the biggest threat in today's national and local elections by harassing and extorting money from candidates.

The NPA claims that its collection of "permit-to-campaign" fees emanates from their "political authority" in areas under communist control.

"If there is one peaceful voting place in the country, it is inside our guerrilla zones," Rosal said.

"And because the conduct of the election inside the Red area is peaceful and orderly, the poll watchers usually finish their task much earlier than their counterparts inside the towns and cities," he added.

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He warned local candidates not to resort to vote-buying and urged voters not to sell votes. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

North, Central Luzon voters rate bets on issues

By the PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and PDI Central Luzon Desk

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Baguio City's mayoral candidates did not fight over a better tax scheme for its growing economy or future land development projects that would contain its squatting crisis.

Instead, a P20-per-hour parking fee had influenced the way candidates had run their campaigns since April, one of the strangest issues that changed the political landscape in the city.

Councilor Braulio Yaranon, a mayoral aspirant, had placed incumbent Mayor Bernardo Vergara, incumbent Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, and the entire city council on the defensive over a management contract that allowed the Jadewell Parking Corp. to clamp or tow vehicles that failed to pay parking fees.

The contract has spawned court cases, which question the legal mandate backing Jadewell's power to confiscate erring vehicles.

Yaranon said the pay-parking issue had united some 12,000 public and private motorists and vehicle owners against officials who enforced the contract.

The reelectionist officials of Baguio City were also pushed against the wall in this campaign for their role in restoring the operations of a casino.

The first casino in the city was destroyed by the July 1990 earthquake, prompting the government to accede to a Church-led crusade for a "no-gambling" policy for Baguio. But many of the incumbent officials reversed that policy.

In Benguet and Mt. Province, the near-bankruptcy of the multimillion-peso vegetable industry, courtesy of import liberalization and smuggling, will help influence voters on election day.

The two provinces have about 150,000 farmers who depend on vegetable farming for livelihood.

In Ilocos Norte, the elections will center on issues besieging tobacco farmers, illegal drugs, smuggling of marine species and illegal gambling.

Tobacco farmers have switched from tobacco planting to cultivating other cash crops such as tomato and corn. They have abandoned their tobacco farms because of the lands' supposed high salinity and rock bottom prices of tobacco in the market.

They have threatened to abandon tobacco cultivation permanently if the government fails to address the low buying price of tobacco traders.

Ilocano voters will also consider the local governments' ability to balance the promotion of foreign investments and tourism, on one hand, and protecting the interest of their constituents.

In Pampanga, the issues include the solution to perennial flooding, quarry revenues and *jueteng*.

All three gubernatorial candidates (Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, Rep. Zenaida Cruz-Ducut and Board Member Mark Lapid) have flood mitigation measures in their respective platforms.

Bondoc and Ducut have openly criticized Gov. Manuel Lapid for mismanaging the quarry industry and accused him of pocketing the revenues and enriching from these.

Also among the issues discussed are the rehabilitation of Mt. Pinatubo-affected villages, education, health and support for farmers.

A big issue facing the electorate in Pampanga, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino is the eradication of jueteng.

In most areas in Northern and Central Luzon the campaign revolved around the issues of employment and union problems, peace and order, insurgency, leadership competence of ruling political families, nepotism and corruption and mismanagement of government funds. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Cristina Arzadon, Peter La. Julian, Leoncio Balbin Jr., Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Ben Moses Ebreo, Melvin Gascon and Maurice Malanes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and Tonette Orejas, Russell Arador, Ansbert Joaquin and Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

POLLROUND

Warning on fake bills

LEGAZPI CITY—The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has warned the public on fake peso bills circulating in Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate and Catanduanes. Margen del Rosario, BSP Currency Operation Unit head, said they expected more fake bills to circulate, especially on election day based on her experiences since 1972. The bills are usually in P100 and P500 denominations. Information reaching the INQUIRER said about P4 million worth of fake bills would flood Masbate alone to be used in today's elections. Del Rosario said, however, that they were prepared to address the problem. ***Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Cagayanos expect no violence

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Cagayan province, dubbed the fifth most violent province decades ago, is expected to breeze through the elections today without any violent incident. This optimism is based on the belief of Cagayanos that local candidates will keep their cool because of their respect for the Lady of Piat, which is having a "voyage of peace." The voyage is preparatory to the quadricentennial of the image's arrival from Portuguese Macau to Nueva Segovia where it was used to pacify the warring natives who massacred several Spanish settlers who had abused them 400 years ago. ***Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Army denies intimidation report

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Col. Raymundo Ferrer, chief of the 103rd Army Brigade, denied an Agence France-Presse report in the INQ7 of an Abu Sayyaf threat on the conduct of elections in the Tipo-Tipo and Sumisip towns in Basilan. The AFP quoted Ferrer as saying that more troops had been deployed to Basilan to protect the polls from threats by Abu Black, an Abu Sayyaf commander. The report also said Abu Black had been intimidating people in the towns of Tipo-Tipo and Sumisip. "Maybe they mixed up the details. I did not say Tipo-Tipo is under threat from the ASG because the place is an ASG-free zone," Ferrer said. He also denied tagging Abu Black as a commander of the Abu Sayyaf. ***Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

ELEKSYON 2004

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Councilor Braulio Yaranon, a mayoral aspirant, had placed incumbent Mayor Bernardo Vergara, incumbent Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, and the entire city council on the defensive over a management contract that allowed the Jadewell Parking Corp. to clamp or tow vehicles that failed to pay parking fees.

The contract has spawned court cases, which question the legal mandate backing Jadewell's power to confiscate erring vehicles.

Yaranon said the pay-parking issue had united some 12,000 public and private motorists and vehicle owners against officials who enforced the contract.

The reelectionist officials of Baguio City were also pushed against the wall in this campaign for their role in restoring the operations of a casino.

The first casino in the city was destroyed by the July 1990 earthquake, prompting the government to accede to a Church-led crusade for a "no-gambling" policy for Baguio. But many of the incumbent officials reversed that policy.

In Benguet and Mt. Province, the near-bankruptcy of the multimillion-peso vegetable industry, courtesy of import liberalization and smuggling, will help influence voters on election day.

The two provinces have about 150,000 farmers who depend on vegetable farming for livelihood.

In Ilocos Norte, the elections will center on issues besieging tobacco farmers, illegal drugs, smuggling of marine species and illegal gambling.

Tobacco farmers have switched from tobacco planting to cultivating other cash crops such as tomato and corn. They have abandoned their tobacco farms because of the lands' supposed high salinity and rock bottom prices of tobacco in the market.

They have threatened to abandon tobacco cultivation permanently if the government fails to address the low buying price of tobacco traders.

Ilocano voters will also consider the local governments' ability to balance the promotion of foreign investments and tourism, on one hand, and protecting the interest of their constituents.

In Pampanga, the issues include the solution to perennial flooding, quarry revenues and *jueteng*.

All three gubernatorial candidates (Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, Rep. Zenaida Cruz-Ducut and Board Member Mark Lapid) have flood mitigation measures in their respective platforms.

Bondoc and Ducut have openly criticized Gov. Manuel Lapid for mismanaging the quarry industry and accused him of pocketing the revenues and enriching from these.

Also among the issues discussed are the rehabilitation of Mt. Pinatubo-affected villages, education, health and support for farmers.

A big issue facing the electorate in Pampanga, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino is the eradication of jueteng.

In most areas in Northern and Central Luzon the campaign revolved around the issues of employment and union problems, peace and order, insurgency, leadership competence of ruling political families, nepotism and corruption and mismanagement of government funds. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Cristina Arzadon, Peter La. Julian, Leoncio Balbin Jr., Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Ben Moses Ebreo, Melvin Gascon and Maurice Malanes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and Tonette Orejas, Russell Arador, Ansbert Joaquin and Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

POLLROUND

Warning on fake bills

LEGAZPI CITY—The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has warned the public on fake peso bills circulating in Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate and Catanduanes. Margen del Rosario, BSP Currency Operation Unit head, said they expected more fake bills to circulate, especially on election day based on her experiences since 1972. The bills are usually in P100 and P500 denominations. Information reaching the INQUIRER said about P4 million worth of fake bills would flood Masbate alone to be used in today's elections. Del Rosario said, however, that they were prepared to address the problem. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cagayanos expect no violence

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Cagayan province, dubbed the fifth most violent province decades ago, is expected to breeze through the elections today without any violent incident. This optimism is based on the belief of Cagayanos that local candidates will keep their cool because of their respect for the Lady of Piat, which is having a "voyage of peace." The voyage is preparatory to the quadricentennial of the image's arrival from Portuguese Macau to Nueva Segovia where it was used to pacify the warring natives who massacred several Spanish settlers who had abused them 400 years ago. *Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Army denies intimidation report

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Col. Raymundo Ferrer, chief of the 103rd Army Brigade, denied an Agence France-Presse report in the INQ7 of an Abu Sayyaf threat on the conduct of elections in the Tipo-Tipo and Sumisip towns in Basilan. The AFP quoted Ferrer as saying that more troops had been deployed to Basilan to protect the polls from threats by Abu Black, an Abu Sayyaf commander. The report also said Abu Black had been intimidating people in the towns of Tipo-Tipo and Sumisip. "Maybe they mixed up the details. I did not say Tipo-Tipo is under threat from the ASG because the place is an ASG-free zone," Ferrer said. He also denied tagging Abu Black as a commander of the Abu Sayyaf. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

MANGYAN VOTE
POLITICIANS bring these Mangyan voters and their families to a camp in Paluan, Occidental Mindoro, to ensure their votes during elections.
MADONNA T. VIROLA

Ecleo may escape parricide rap with accessory's conviction

By Jolene R. Bulambot and Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Controversial cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr. might have found a way out of his parricide case after a regional trial court judge in Barili, Cebu, convicted another person as accessory for the murder of Alona Bacolod-Ecleo.

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Salatandre said he could use the ruling of Judge Idelfonso Suerte to move for the dismissal of the parricide case.

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Ben and his parents were killed by a follower of Ecleo, days before the cult leader was arrested in his religious enclave on Dinagat Island in Surigao del Norte following a bloodbath that left 19 people dead.

Devinadera's conviction was described as irregular and shocking by lawyer Arbet Sta. Ana Yongco, the private prosecutor in the parricide case.

She said she never knew that a similar case was filed before another court in Cebu. She questioned the decision because the crime was believed to have been committed in Cebu City and not in Dalaguete or Dumanjug town.

"That is surprising, we never learned nor knew about any case filed other than the parricide case. It's highly irregular. If there is such a decision then it will (be) obvious that the judiciary can be manipulated. The issue here is about jurisdiction, the crime is committed in Cebu City," Yongco said.

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Reynaldo Esmeralda, NBI director for Central Visayas, recalled that Devinadera did not tell them anything about the case filed against him for supposedly helping Ben Bacolod kill his sister in January, 2002.

He said Devinadera decided to leave the NBI compound at the Capitol site last month because "he was getting tired."

"He even thanked us for treating him well. We did not know that at that time, he was already facing charges in court," he told the INQUIRER.

Esmeralda was stunned when told that Devinadera had been convicted of accessory to murder.

"We will become a laughing stock," he said as he pointed out that the parricide case against Ecleo for allegedly killing his wife is pending before another court in Cebu City.

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He earlier claimed that Alona was murdered by Ben and not by her husband.

Ben allegedly strangled Alona after she refused to give him money, Devinadera said.

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But after months of investigation, the NBI found nothing to substantiate Devinadera's allegation.

"He could not even pinpoint where exactly did they dump Alona's body," Esmeralda said.

He also pointed out that Devinadera claimed he had gone to various areas to hide after the killing murder.

But he added that Devinadera could not remember where he stayed while he was in Daanbantayan, Cebu; Ormoc and Tacloban cities in Leyte, and Butuan City.

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Bacolod suspected that Jaime could have been paid to file a complaint against their brother.

"This is very alarming. Everybody is caught off-guard. We never even learned that a case was filed. Jaime might have been paid to do it because he refused to leave Dinagat. This is just one of the strategies of the defense to acquit Ruben (Ecleo)," Ricky said.

2 minors killed in Sorsogon 'encounter'

BULAN, Sorsogon—Two minors were killed during an alleged crossfire between government soldiers and New People's Army rebels in Barangay Recto here at about 3 p.m. on Friday.

Fr. Douglas Dimaano, Bulan parish priest, identified the victims as Mylene Golloso, 14, and her brother, Raymond, 6, who was inflicted with the Down's Syndrome.

Dimaano said he first heard of the deaths from a lay minister in the area and confirmed the report from a certain *hermana* Mila Torio, a barangay kagawad who, together with the village chief of Barangay Recto, were "dictated upon" to sign a document implicating the NPA in the killing.

"They were made to sign a statement saying that the NPA opened fire first and the military responded, and the NPA shot the two young victims," the priest said.

According to Dimaano, the victims' sister, Melody, 18, who was with them in the house together with a younger brother, said she heard a volley of gunshots, prompting them to hide inside the house.

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When the mother of the victims, who was at the neighbor's house, heard the gunshots, she ran to their house and saw seven military and Cafgu men 10-15 meters from the area.

Dimaano said the Golloso house in Barangay Recto, a coastal area, was isolated and the next-door neighbor was about 100 meters away.

When the mother cried, "My two sons are dead; help me!" the military men left, Dimaano quoted Melody as saying.

The mother alleged that a Cafgu named Cesar was with the group.

The children's bodies were brought to Barangay Aquino, Bulan, while Melody, who escaped with her younger brother during the shooting, was still in a state of shock and always crying, Dimaano said.

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TANDAG, Surigao del Sur—Opposition candidates here have expressed fears over what they called a "reign of terror" that has gripped the province.

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Rep. Pichay also said there was no need for harassment since a survey showed they were winning.

Pichay also denied claims they were employing goons, saying it was the opposition that have goons.

"What we have are police and Army escorts. We have the law on our side," Pichay declared.

Around 740 policemen were deployed in Surigao del Sur. This has been augmented by a team of Army men for each town after police authorities declared the province as a hotly-contested area. *Ma. Kristina Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Teachers urged to stay neutral

DAVAO CITY—Stay neutral and never accept food.

An official of the Department of Education in Southern Mindanao yesterday reminded teachers serving in the elections against accepting any kind of food from politicians and their supporters to avoid "misinterpretation" and harassment from rival candidates.

Susana Teresa Estigoy, DepEd assistant regional director, said teachers should refrain from accepting food or snacks from candidates or political leaders even if these were offered out of goodwill.

"In order for the teachers not to be misinterpreted, they should not show any inclination or indication of bias to any candidates even if they offer food or not," she said.

Estigoy said teachers are covered by Civil Service rules and will be sanctioned if found guilty of electioneering.

"We are expecting the teachers to be neutral," she said.

But Estigoy said even if the teachers remained neutral, the Department of Education is expecting some form of harassment or persuasion from politicians, especially incumbent candidates because they are in the best position "to offer assistance" to the teachers.

Commission on Elections regional director Lirio Joquino said giving money or any item of value to the teachers is strictly prohibited. "This covers the offer of food or snacks," Joquino said.

Meanwhile, Gloria Labor, Davao City schools division superintendent, said teachers are ready to serve in the elections. She said they have already received part of their P3,000 per diem. *Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

8 die in mishap

BUTUAN CITY—Eight people, three of them children, died while two others were injured after the overloaded car they were riding in rammed into a concrete bridge in Santiago, Agusan del Norte, around 3 a.m. Saturday. Senior Supt. Juan Duan Awayan, Agusan del Norte, police chief, said the victims were on their way to Surigao City and were traveling on board the car being driven by Melito Diez, 37, when the tragedy occurred. Awayan said Diez had apparently fell asleep amid the foggy road condition. Diez, his wife identified only as Daday and their children Cheryll Ann, Chicay, 1 and Melito Jr., 1, along with relatives Tata Lamata, 38, Deding Lamata, 37 and Jean Lamata, 12, died in the car wreck. Awayan identified the survivors as Joan Lamata, 27, and Joah Lamata. Unconfirmed reports said that the Diez family, who lives in Bukidnon rushed home to Surigao in time for Monday's balloting. *Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Boy killed in hit-and-run

ATIMONAN, Quezon—A ten-year-old boy was killed after being hit by a cargo truck in Barangay Sta. Catalina, this town, along the Maharlika Highway on Tuesday. The truck driver fled after the incident. Investigation said the Jomer Cariguez of the same barangay, was hit by the speeding cargo truck owned by a certain Rosalina Cudia, SSS Village, Project 8, Quezon City. The victim was rushed to Doña Marta Memorial Hospital but was declared dead on arrival. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Charred body found

BATANGAS CITY—Police found the corpse of a man charred beyond recognition and inserted into two car tires that were used to burn the still unidentified victim that was recovered in Sitio Binulihan, Barangay Talahib Pandayan, this city, on Saturday morning. At about 3 a.m. that day, Lucilo Tolentino, a resident of the coastal village of Sitio Binulihan, called the police and informed them of a man being burned near the shore. When the police arrived, the corpse was already charred to the bones and had no means of being recognized. According to Scene of Crime Operations (Soco) investigator Sr. Insp. Anacleta Cultura, no tissue or flesh remained in the burned corpse. It was taken to San Fernando Funeral Homes that same day but up to press time, nobody had claimed the body yet or identified it. *Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NPA executes pusher

TIAONG, Quezon—At least four suspected members of the Sparrow Unit of the New People's Army rebels gunned down a suspected drug pusher on Sunday in Barangay Palisa in this town. Police identified the victim as Ricardo Ilao, 36, and resident of the village. Investigation said Ilao was walking home alone at around 9 p.m. after watching a basketball game when two of the suspects suddenly appeared from behind and shot him at close range. The victim sustained several fatal gunshots in the head, causing his immediate death. The two other suspects acted as looked out during the shooting. Police said the suspects shouted. "Mabuhay ang NPA" before they casually walked away from the scene of the crime. Investigators said the victim could have been killed due to his alleged involvement in illegal drug activities. *Delfin T.Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

3 females found dead

STO. TOMAS, Pampanga— Three persons, one of them a 13-year-old girl, were found dead in a newly built house in Barangay Vicente here on May 2. Police said the victims—sisters Rosel Sambo, 32, and Rosita Zapata, 36, and Mylene Mercado, 13—were found in a room of a house on Del Pilar Street. Sambo and Zapata suffered more than 20 stab wounds each, while Mercado had four stab wounds. The bodies were discovered by Maximo Zapata, father of Zapata and Sambo and grandfather of Mercado at about 8 a.m. Sunday. Zapata ruled out robbery in the attack. He hinted of a family conflict as a possible motive in the murders. *Tonette [illegible]ejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Around 740 policemen were deployed in Surigao del Sur. This has been augmented by a team of Army men for each town after police authorities declared the province as a hotly-contested area. *Ma. Kristina Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Teachers urged to stay neutral

DAVAO CITY—Stay neutral and never accept food.

An official of the Department of Education in Southern Mindanao yesterday reminded teachers serving in the elections against accepting any kind of food from politicians and their supporters to avoid "misinterpretation" and harassment from rival candidates.

Susana Teresa Estigoy, DepEd assistant regional director, said teachers should refrain from accepting food or snacks from candidates or political leaders even if these were offered out of goodwill.

"In order for the teachers not to be misinterpreted, they should not show any inclination or indication of bias to any candidates even if they offer food or not," she said.

Estigoy said teachers are covered by Civil Service rules and will be sanctioned if found guilty of electioneering

"We are expecting the teachers to be neutral," she said

But Estigoy said even if the teachers remained neutral, the Department of Education is expecting some form of harassment or persuasion from politicians, especially incumbent candidates because they are in the best position "to offer assistance" to the teachers.

Commission on Elections regional director Lirio Joquino said giving money or any item of value to the teachers is strictly prohibited. "This covers the offer of food or snacks," Joquino said.

Meanwhile, Gloria Labor, Davao City schools division superintendent, said teachers are ready to serve in the elections. She said they have already received part of their P3,000 per diem. *Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

8 die in mishap

BUTUAN CITY—Eight people, three of them children, died while two others were injured after the overloaded car they were riding in rammed into a concrete bridge in Santiago, Agusan del Norte, around 3 a.m. Saturday. Senior Supt. Juan Duan Awayan, Agusan del Norte, police chief, said the victims were on their way to Surigao City and were traveling on board the car being driven by Melito Diez, 37, when the tragedy occurred Awayan said Diez had apparently fell asleep amid the foggy road condition. Diez, his wife identified only as Daday and their children Cheryll Ann, Chicay, 1 and Melito Jr., 1, along with relatives Tata Lamata, 38, Deding Lamata, 37 and Jean Lamata, 12, died in the car wreck. Awayan identified the survivors as Joan Lamata, 27, and Joah Lamata. Unconfirmed reports said that the Diez family, who lives in Bukidnon rushed home to Surigao in time for Monday's balloting

Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Boy killed in hit-and-run

ATIMONAN, Quezon—A ten-year-old boy was killed after being hit by a cargo truck in Barangay Sta. Catalina, this town, along the Maharlika Highway on Tuesday. The truck driver fled after the incident. Investigation said the Jomer Cariguez of the same barangay, was hit by the speeding cargo truck owned by a certain Rosalina Cudia, SSS Village, Project 8, Quezon City. The victim was rushed to Doña Marta Memorial Hospital but was declared dead on arrival. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Charred body found

BATANGAS CITY—Police found the corpse of a man charred beyond recognition and inserted into two car tires that were used to burn the still unidentified victim that was recovered in Sitio Binulihan, Barangay Talahib Pandayan, this city, on Saturday morning. At about 3 a.m. that day, Lucilo Tolentino, a resident of the coastal village of Sitio Binulihan, called the police and informed them of a man being burned near the shore. When the police arrived, the corpse was already charred to the bones and had no means of being recognized. According to Scene of Crime Operations (Soco) investigator Sr. Insp. Anacleta Cultura, no tissue or flesh remained in the burned corpse. It was taken to San Fernando Funeral Homes that same day but up to press time, nobody had claimed the body yet or identified it. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NPA executes pusher

TIAONG, Quezon—At least four suspected members of the Sparrow Unit of the New People's Army rebels gunned down a suspected drug pusher on Sunday in Barangay Paiisa in this town. Police identified the victim as Ricardo Ilao, 36, and resident of the village. Investigation said Ilao was walking home alone at around 9 p.m. after watching a basketball game when two of the suspects suddenly appeared from behind and shot him at close range. The victim sustained several fatal gunshots in the head, causing his immediate death. The two other suspects acted as looked out during the shooting. Police said the suspects shouted, "Mabuhay ang NPA" before they casually walked away from the scene of the crime. Investigators said the victim could have been killed due to his alleged involvement in illegal drug activities. *Delfin T.Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

3 females found dead

STO. TOMAS, Pampanga— Three persons, one of them a 13-year-old girl, were found dead in a newly built house in Barangay Vicente here on May 2. Police said the victims—sisters Rosel Sambo, 32, and Rosita Zapata, 36, and Mylene Mercado, 13—were found in a room of a house on Del Pilar Street. Sambo and Zapata suffered more than 20 stab wounds each, while Mercado had four stab wounds. The bodies were discovered by Maximo Zapata, father of Zapata and Sambo and grandfather of [illegible] about 8 a.m. Sunday. Zapata ruled out robbery in the attack. He hinted of a family conflict as a possible motive in the murders. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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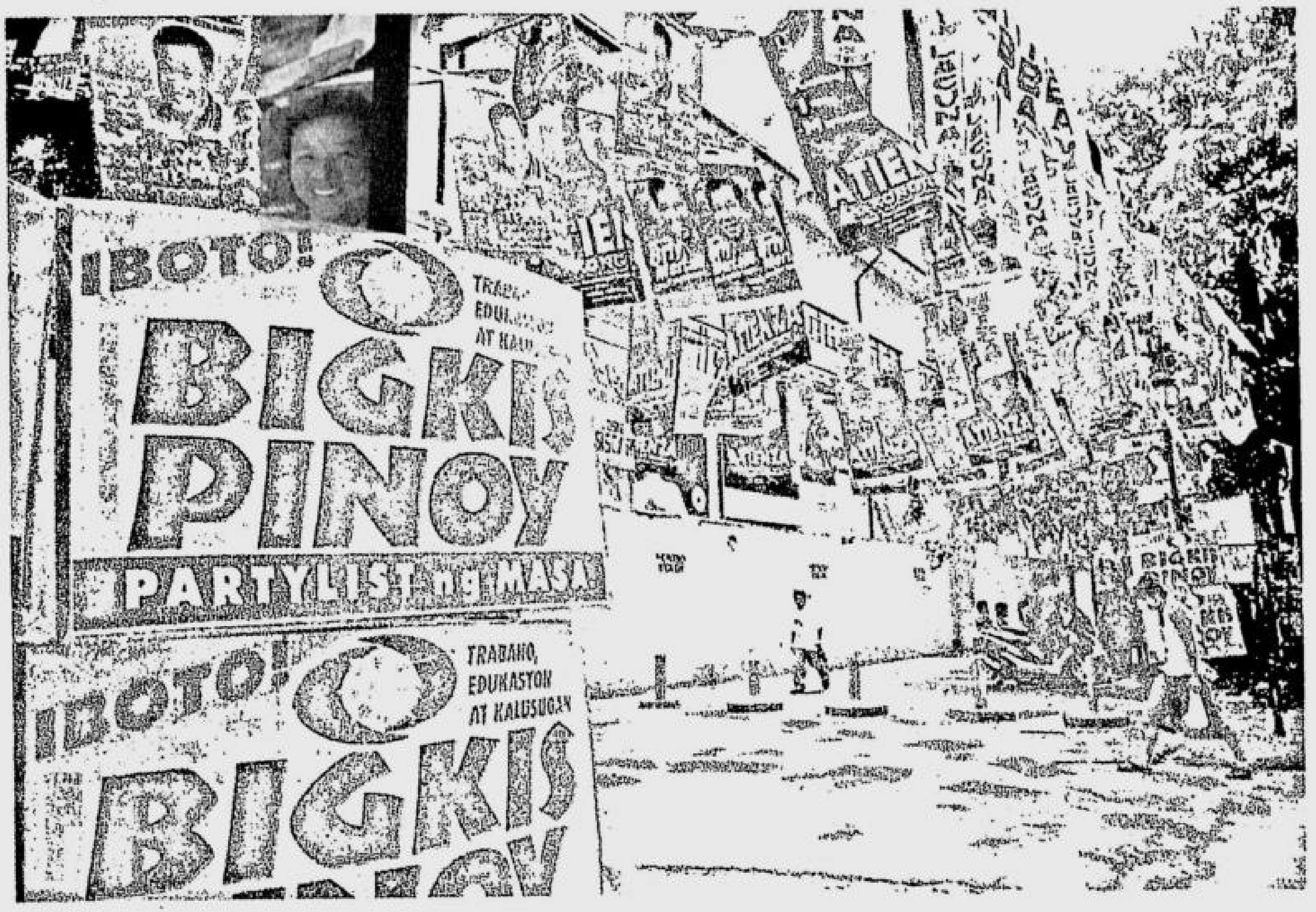

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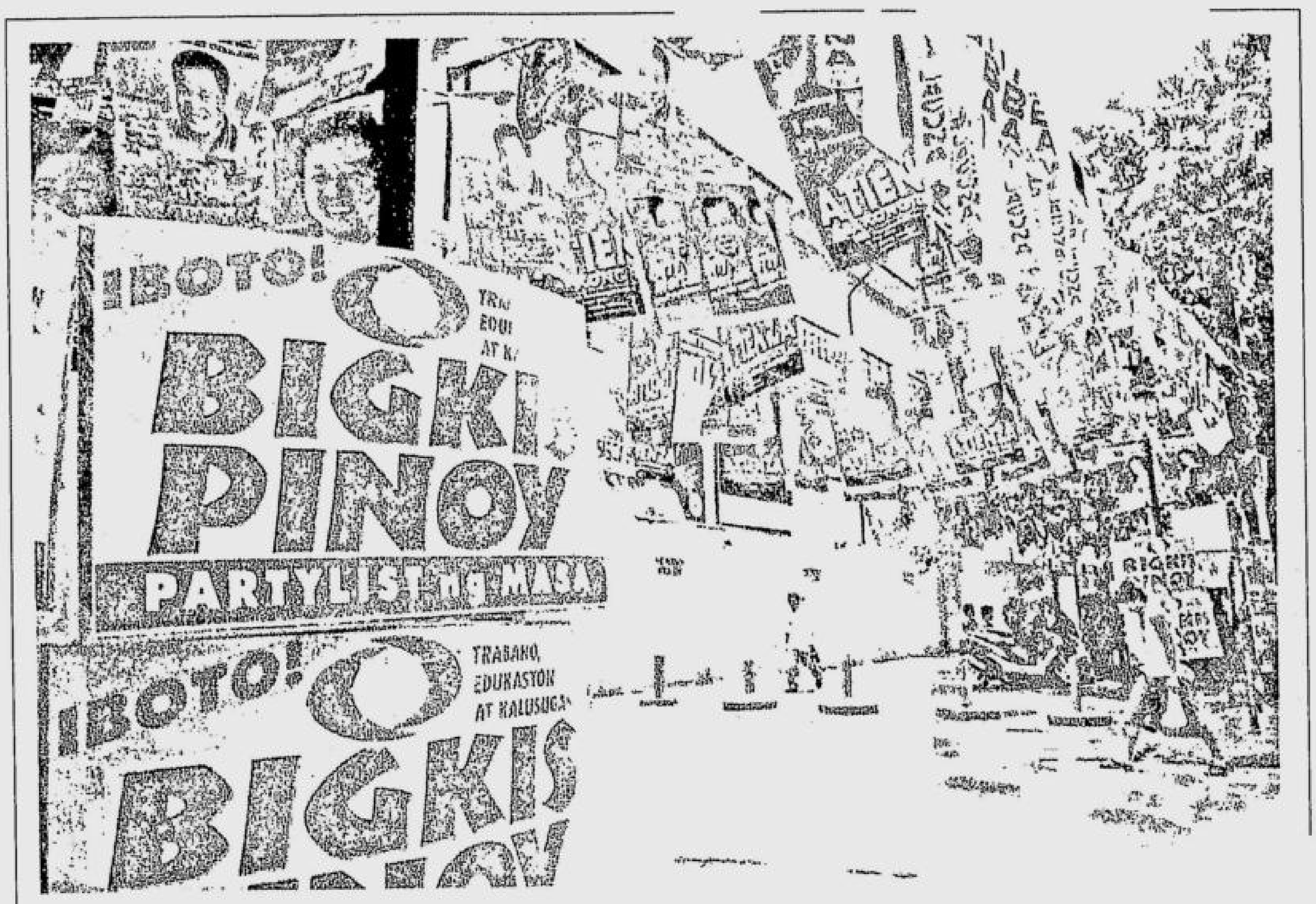

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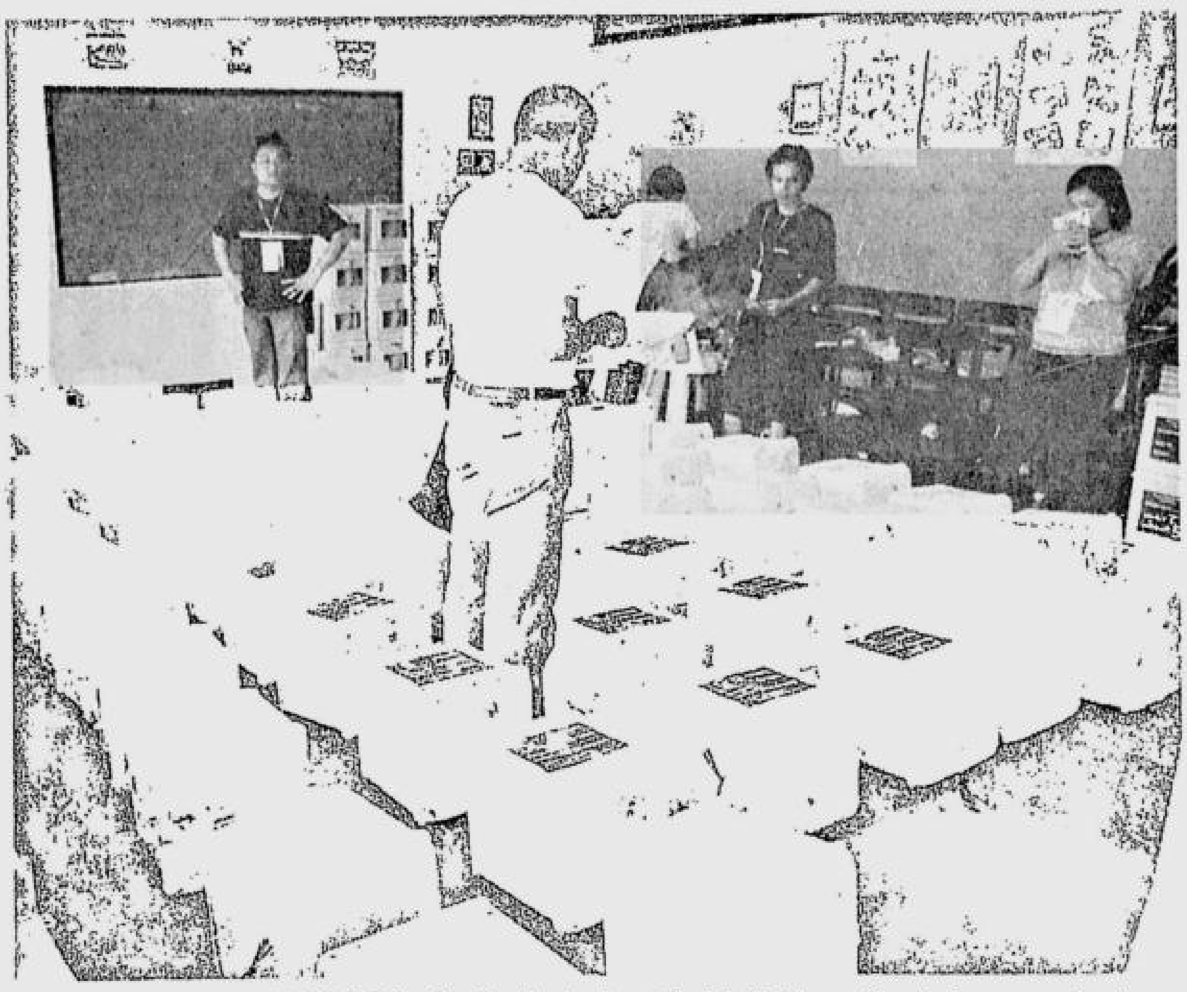

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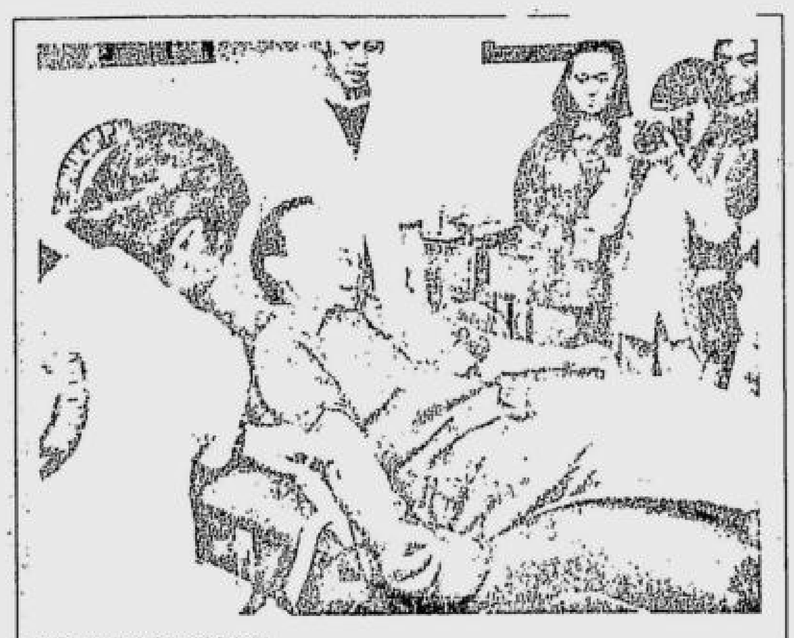

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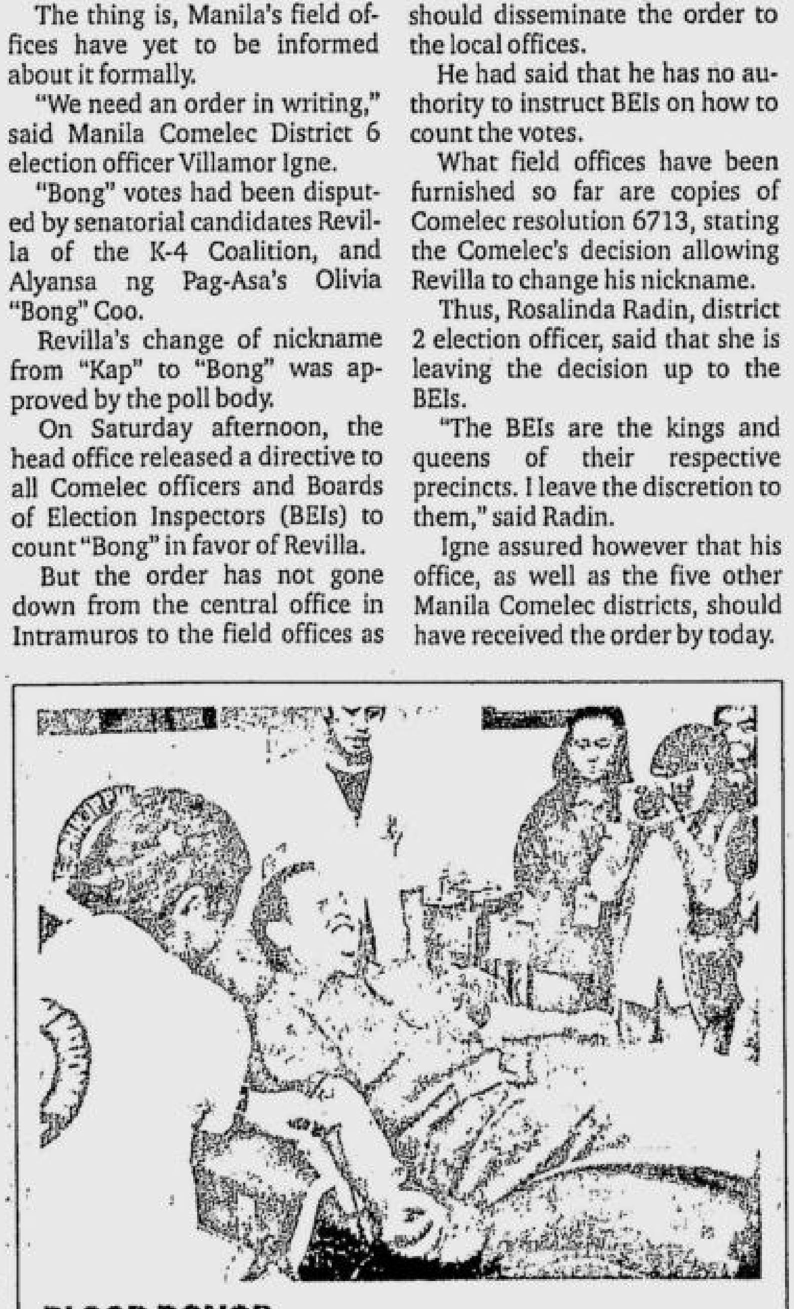

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

MONDAY, MAY 10, 2004

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

SUERTRES 9 3 7
(In exact order)

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5 10 13 19 20 34

4,000 cops, 3,000 soldiers on watch

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr. and Margaux Ortiz

MORE than 4,000 policemen and 3,000 soldiers will be deployed in schools, city and municipal halls in Metro Manila to secure the elections today.

Around five million voters are expected to cast their votes in the metropolis.

Half of the policemen will be deployed in the southern parts of the metropolis, according to Southern Police District head Chief Supt. Prospero Noble.

On standby

The rest of the policemen and soldiers, including those from the special weapons and tactics and special action units, will be on standby following the declaration of a full alert status since Friday.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo De Leon told the INQUIRER yesterday that about three to five policemen in full uniform would be deployed in each of the 768 polling centers in the metropolis.

At least 984 policemen will also be deployed in the 17 areas in Metro Manila where canvassing of votes will be done.

Vigilant

In a statement, De Leon assured voters the police are prepared to ensure an honest, peaceful and orderly elections. He also asked voters to remain vigilant.

Northern Police District Director Marcelino Franco said yesterday policemen would be stationed near schools so teachers or voters could easily seek help in case of emergency.

There are 166 polling places in the Camanava area, nearly half of which are in the two districts of Caloocan City. Two trucks of soldiers had also arrived in the district yesterday.

Aside from schools, policemen will also be deployed in all the foreign embassies.

Noble said they would saturate polling precincts with law enforcers to "let the people feel that the police are there."

He added they would especially focus on areas of concern in Taguig including Lower Bicutan, Western Bicutan and Maharlika Village.

Protection

"There were a lot of public schoolteachers who were afraid of serving their election responsibilities in Maharlika Village during the last elections," Noble said. "I assured them it would not happen during my term."

Supt. Ramon Reyes, Taguig police chief, said he has talked to the barangay officials in the areas of concern to prevent unusual and violent scenarios. "We are ready to contain any eventuality. We will give the voters the protection they deserve," he vowed.

LANI SINGS
Singer Lani Misalucha sings the Philippine national anthem before the WBA/IBF featherweight boxing bout between Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico City and Manny Pacquiao at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada, Saturday. The bout ended in a draw. REUTERS

Traffic aides posted near polling areas

By Margaux Ortiz

IN ANTICIPATION of heavy traffic brought about by the elections, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has assigned most of their traffic enforcers in areas near polling precincts.

"Traffic will be snarled only in streets around polling precincts. We are expecting smoother flow of traffic in main roads and thoroughfares," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

Vergel de Dios added that their 2,000 traffic enforcers have been on duty since Saturday.

He also said that the agency has assigned 30 MMDA directors to monitor the election period's day-to-day activities.

Vergel de Dios said the director, who will work on a six-hour shift, will head a monitoring team which will report anything unusual happening in Metro Manila during the elections.

Vergel de Dios also stressed that the number coding scheme for vehicles will be suspended today, a declared holiday.

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Ang Iglesia, El Shaddai vote: Solid pa nga ba?

Ang endorsement ng dalawang religious groups -- ang Iglesia ni Cristo at ang Katolikong El Shaddai -- ay matamis na inaasam-asam ng mga sari-saring pulitiko. Pero solid nga ba pag-bumoto ang dalawang grupo? Sundan natin ang ilang miyembro ng Iglesia at El Shaddai ngayong araw ng halalan.
At abangan ang sagot, sa isa na namang election special ng InqTV, ngayong alas-10 ng gabi sa ABC.

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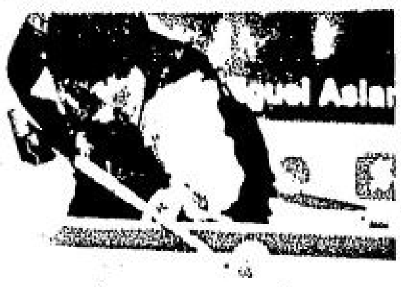

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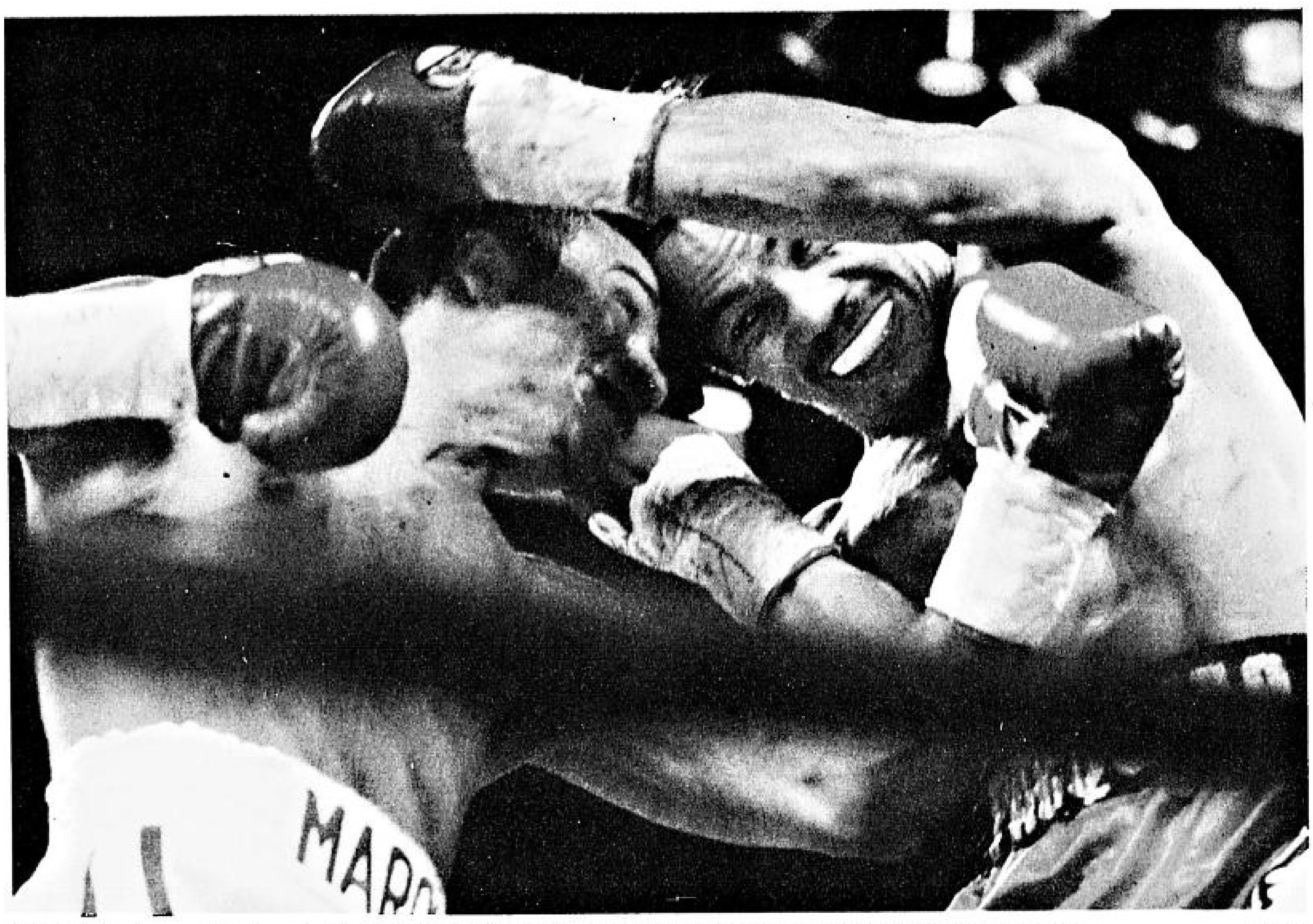

WBA/IBF featherweight champion Marquez (left) and Pacquiao engage in close-quarter fighting in the second round. REUTERS

Pacquiao's foe came back from the grave

LAS VEGAS—Juan Manuel Marquez kept getting up and never gave up.

Knocked down three times in the first round, Marquez rallied Saturday night to salvage a draw and retain his WBA and IBF 126-pound (56.7-kilogram) titles in a thrilling fight with Filipino hero Manny Pacquiao.

Marquez said he thought he won the fight.

"In the first round I went in there overconfident," Marquez said. "But I survived that and I thought I won."

Marquez, who seemed as if he wouldn't make it out of the first round, took the fight to Pacquiao from the third round on in a fight that had the crowd at the MGM Grand hotel arena on its feet cheering almost every round.

But Pacquiao also thought he had the judges' nod.

"I should have won the fight. I'm disappointed," Pacquiao said.

Marquez looked as if he wasn't going to get off the canvas after the third knockdown in the first round, but got on his feet at the count of eight and lasted the final few seconds of the round.

From then on, he was a different fighter, counter punching effectively and piling up the rounds.

By the final round, the three knockdowns were but a distant memory as Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, told him he had to win the final round.

The fighters then put on a show to end the fight before hugging each other as the final bell sounded.

"I thought Pacquiao had the edge, my God, we had a 10-7 edge in the first round," Roach said.

Pacquiao wasted little time going after Marquez, knocking him down for the first time with 1:35 left in the first round with a straight left hand.

Marquez got up, only to go down seconds later from another left hand.

After Marquez went down for a third time late in the first round it seemed like the fight was over.

Marquez laid on his back on the canvas, gloves over his eyes, while referee Joe Cortez counted before finally getting up at the count of eight and finishing out the round.

The white trunks of Marquez were stained with the blood flowing from his nose, but he fought back and soon began landing several good shots.

Late in the third round, he hit Pacquiao with a right hand that knocked him back and the two traded punches at the bell.

Marquez was more than holding his own, while Pacquiao seemed to be trying to load up on his left hand.

"More than one shot, do you hear me?" Roach told Pacquiao after the fourth round.

Pacquiao was cut over the right eye in the fifth round, and Marquez kept the pressure on. In his corner after the sixth round, his trainer told him he had won ever round but the first.

Both fighters had won 13 straight, and Marquez had stopped his last 11 opponents.

In a super lightweight fight, Miguel Cotto of Puerto Rico remained unbeaten by taking a tough 12-round unanimous decision over Lovemore N'Dou.

Cotto, a 2000 Olympian and the WBA's No. 1 contender at 140 pounds, won on all three scorecards but took some big right hands from N'Dou in improving to 20-0.

Cotto won 116-112 on one scorecard, 115-113 on a second and 117-111 on the third.

N'Dou, who lives in Australia, fell to 38-7-1, losing his second fight in a row. AP

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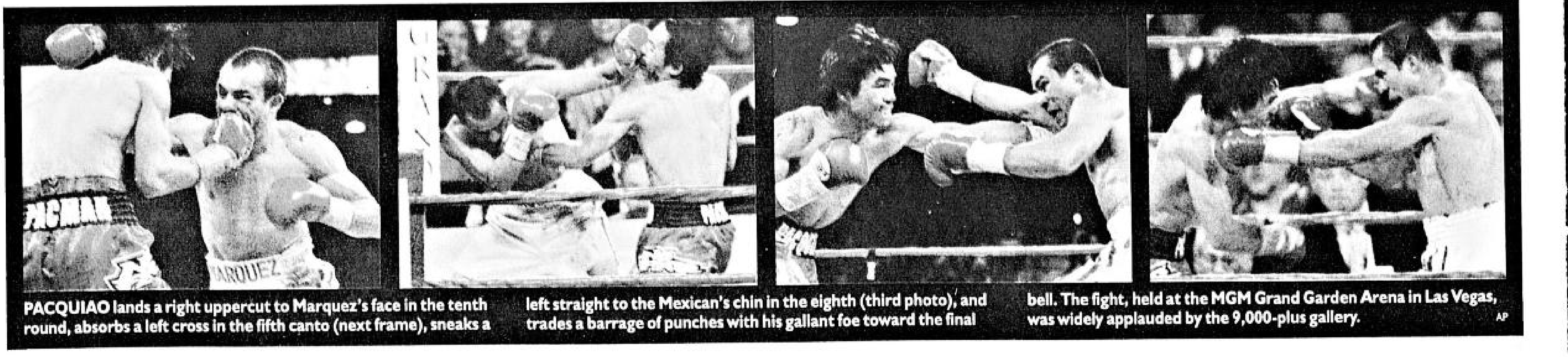


PACQUIAO lands a right uppercut to Marquez's face in the tenth round, absorbs a left cross in the fifth canto (next frame), sneaks a left straight to the Mexican's chin in the eighth (third photo), and trades a barrage of punches with his gallant foe toward the final bell. The fight, held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, was widely applauded by the 9,000-plus gallery. AP

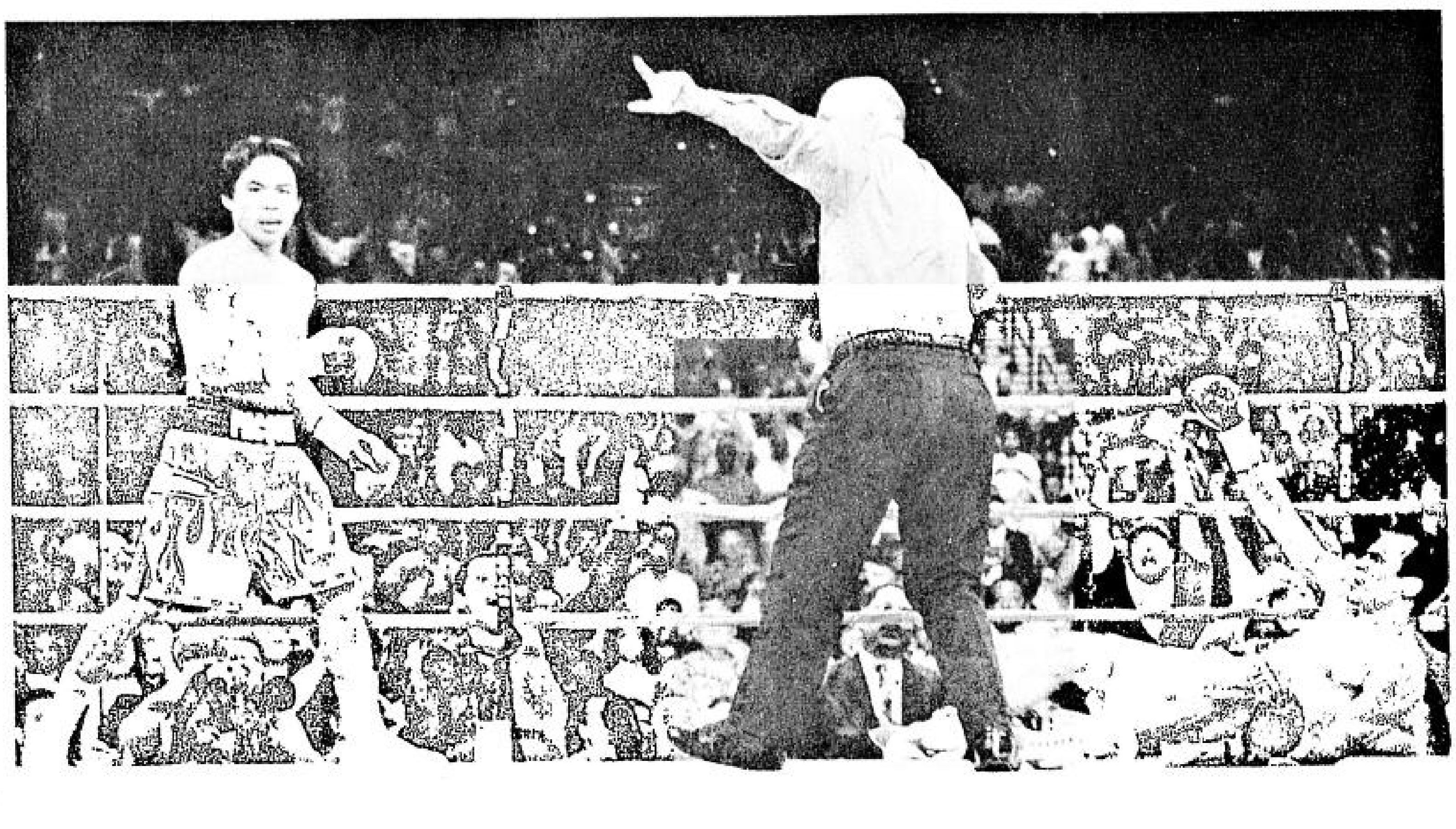
Contrasting views on draw

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza had contrasting opinions following Manny Pacquiao's split draw with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in their world featherweight title fight in Las Vegas yesterday.

"A draw with the world champion already represents a victory," de Venecia said in a press statement, but Atienza questioned the judges' decision, saying "Manny was obviously the best fighter."

Atienza said that he would still give Pacquiao a hero's welcome in Manila when he returns and, added that, like de Venecia, he remains proud of the Filipino boxing hero acknowledged as the people's featherweight champion.

Atienza, a long-time benefactor and friend of the former IBF super bantamweight champion, said he was extremely disgusted at how judge Bert Clemens saw it as a 113-all fight when "(Pacquiao) knocked down Marquez three times and more than held his own against the featherweight champion in the succeeding rounds."



REFEREE Joe Cortez directs Pacquiao to a neutral corner after the Filipino knocked down Marquez for the third time in the first round. AP

Clemens saw it 10-7 for Pacquiao, while the two other judges, Guy Jutras and John Stewart, gave Pacquiao 10-6 scores in the first round.

Atienza has been a staunch supporter of Pacquiao, who treats the Manila Mayor like a second father.

"Pacquiao remains a true people's champion in the hearts of Filipinos," said de Venecia, who conferred the Congressional Medal of Achievement on Pacquiao after the Filipino stopped the legendary Marco Antonio Barrera in 11 rounds last November.

The General Santos City native is the first and only athlete to receive the medal from Congress. De Venecia said "we are proud of his achievement and grateful for showing the world how Filipinos fight."

Pacquiao decked Marquez, the WBA and IBF featherweight title holder, thrice in the opening round and looked headed for an abbreviated victory, but the Mexican recovered fast and held his ground for the rest of the fight.

Pacquiao later revealed he fought with a swollen left hand starting in the second round and had a blistered toe in the last six rounds.

Meanwhile, Philippine Sports Commission chairman Eric Buhain, speaking in behalf of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said that the whole nation is proud of Pacquiao.

"He (Pacquiao) showed his love for the country by fighting through the pain and a determined opponent," said Buhain. "PGMA and the whole nation is proud of Manny."

Pacquiao fought on a flat tire

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—It's not Thai boxing and Manny Pacquiao could've never won it with a kick.

Not with the use of a good, strong foot, to be exact.

But what's this we have just heard that, given a healthy right toe, Pacquiao, riding on a blazing start, could've stopped the courageous, skillful Juan Manuel Marquez.

Pacquiao, meeting with a horde of foreign mediamen, said he deserved victory and then raised a swollen left hand.

He later said the left, his best weapon, was hurt and started to swell starting the second round.

The injury was a result of his first-round blitz that sent Marquez three times to the canvas.

The deadly hand must've landed not too squarely on hard bone, and thereby got sprained.

**

Could he have finished off Marquez in the succeeding rounds had he not hurt his better hand?

Maybe yes. Maybe no.

What would surface in a post-fight analysis was the glaring inability of Pacquiao to sustain his offensive.

He could not push hard enough to complete his speedy combinations, the sort that had pummeled and ultimately wrecked Marco Antonio Barrera last year.

Pacquiao was also observed relying heavily on his right hand.

Left with only one good hand, he started to be tentative.

He would land solid blows, but they would come long and far between.

Gone was the feared rat-tat-tat attack that had been likened to the California forest fires.

Of course, there's no denying Marquez also managed to offset the fierce offensive by tossing back hefty combinations of his own.

Although visibly badly beaten, Marquez would loom the happier of the two combatants, mainly because he had survived.

Not because he had prevailed.

**

Anyway, after he had shown to media people his swollen left fist, Pacquiao moved down from the podium.

He was heading back to his room on the 16th floor of the MGM Grand, but media people wanted more from him.

Reporters and cameramen cornered him. Microphones were pushed close to his mouth, while camera lights glared.

Maybe Pacquiao did not actually like to offer alibis.

But before they could start firing questions, Pacquiao bent down.

He then proceeded to untie his shoe and next took off his sock, thereby baring a discolored, swollen right toe.

There was a blood clot the size of a dime at the tip of the swollen right toe.

Pacquiao did not have to explain how the bad toe had hurt him during the fight.

But fight expert Moy Lainez, a member of Team Pacquiao, next moved in to explain that, together with the aching, swollen hand, the bad toe prevented the boxer from sustaining his fearsome offensive.

**

How serious was the foot injury?

Not much, really, based on its size.

But it was so bad that it had Pacquiao feeling like a car rolling on a flat tire.

He would often lose his balance.

He would often stall on his tracks.

He could no longer jump in for the kill the way he used to.

Could've Pacquiao prevailed if he did not develop toe blisters.

Maybe yes. Maybe no.

Nobody could say for sure how far he could have gone had he rolled on good tires.

But one thing became clear in the end.

Contrary to initial suspicion, the disastrous blister developed during the fight proper.

No, it was not the result of tireless jogging.

The injury, would you believe, developed because Pacquiao had only a thin pair of socks during the fight?

This was confirmed by Pacquiao himself back in his hotel room.

Of course, he no longer bothered to show the bad sock, the culprit, the way he did flash his swollen hand and his foot blisters.

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De Guzman, partner top Forest Invitational

MAR de Guzman and partner BJ Medalla scored 131 points—50 in best ball and 81 in aggregate—on the final day to emerge as overall champion in the 3rd Forest Hills Invitational in Antipolo City yesterday.

De Guzman and Medalla handily beat the tandem of Gary Uy and Damas Wong, who wound up with 120 points in the four-day, two-man team event co-presented by Golforce Inc. and Sun Cellular.

Jimmy Cham, meanwhile, received a set of irons from Wilson after shooting a rare ace at hole No. 13. He used an S-Yard 7-iron and Newing ball 77.

Bagaberde Grill & Bar, Camp John Hay Dev. Co., Foodlink, GMA-7, MRT, TaylorMade adidas Golf, Sports Specialists Worldwide Inc., and Wilson Sports were the major sponsors.

Eric Lim and George Benidy won Division 2 honors. They scored 137, 52 points on bestball and 85 aggregate, to beat Michael Tanto and Arnel Agustin who had 132.

Moya, Nabaldian dispute Rome Masters crown

ROME—Spain's Carlos Moya beat Mariano Zabaleta in straight sets to reach the final of the clay court Rome Masters on Saturday.

Moya, the French Open champion in 1998, won 6-3, 6-4 to prevent an all Argentine final after fifth seed David Nabaldian had booked his place earlier in the day with victory over Albert Costa.

Moya, who had only lost once to Zabaleta in seven meetings, served supremely and his ferocious forehand rarely let him down as he wrapped up the match in 77 minutes at the Foro Italico.

The 27-year-old Spaniard made the breakthrough in the sixth game, breaking the unseeded Zabaleta before closing out the set.

The 22-year-old Nabaldian, a quarterfinalist at this year's Australian Open, recovered from a poor start to defeat the 2002 French Open winner 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, 6-4 in two hours and 36 minutes. AFP

REYES shows vintage championship form.

PDI PHOTO

Bata weaves old cue magic

By Roy Luarca

TAIPEI—Efren "Bata" Reyes' magic is back.

Tested to the hilt, Reyes scraped past Korean Jeong Young Hwa, 12-10, Friday night to snare the fourth leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour here.

On the brink of defeat as he trailed 10-8 with the Korean breaking, the Filipino pool legend dug deep into his repertoire of tricks to claim his third Tour title after settling for third place in the Hong Kong leg.

Reyes had earlier ruled the Singapore and Ho Chi Minh stops of the circuit confined to the region's top players.

"It was tough, but I got the break in the end," said Reyes, who pocketed $10,000 (P560,000) for the effort. "Jeong is good."

Living up to his tag as "The Magician," Reyes displayed spectacular shots, including a quadruple-banked conversion on the fifth rack, a kicked shot on the seventh, a masse shot on the ninth, a triple-banker on the 16th and a pinpoint shot on the 21st rack.

The win widened Reyes' lead against Jeong, 6-1, in their personal duel.

Reyes downed countryman Warren Kiamco, 11-4, in the semifinals to arrange the showdown with Jeong, the Busan Asian Games silver medalist who is ranked ninth in the world.

The 32-year-old Jeong beat Thailand's Chatchawal Rutphae, 11-7, in the other semifinal.

Against Kiamco, Reyes met little trouble.

A clean-up by Kiamco put the count at 6-4, but Reyes did the same in the 11th rack before going all the way with difficult safeties and pinpoint shots.

"I did nothing spectacular against Kiamco, the balls were simply dropping," said the 49-year-old Reyes, already enshrined in the billiards Hall of Fame.

It was the fourth semifinal stint for Kiamco, who earned $3,000, in the country-hopping event started by San Miguel Beer last year.

"He (Reyes) shot well and the balls were well in place, " said the 34-year-old Cebuano, who also bowed to Reyes in the finals of last year's Manila leg and this year's Singapore leg of the $250,000 circuit. "It's really hard to beat him."

En route to the semis, Reyes beat Fil-Indon Alwi, 9-5, countryman Lee Vann Corteza, 9-6, and Korean Park Shin Young, 9-4, in the quarterfinals.

Kiamco's victims were Singaporean William Ang, 9-6, countryman Leonardo Andam, 9-5, and Fil-Malaysian Ibrahim Bin Amir, 9-4, in the quarterfinals.

Another Filipino, Antonio Gabica, reached the quarterfinals worth $1,750. Andam and Corteza made the round of 16 while Francisco "Django" Bustamante, currently the world's top-ranked player but in a three-month slump, suffered another first-round defeat.

Bustamante and Reyes will be leaving for the United States on Friday to compete in the Billiards Congress of America circuit.

Around 300 spectators, many of them miniature flag-waving Filipinos, watched Sunday's action at the Leader Asia-Pacific Creativity Center.

The fifth and concluding leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour, organized by ESPN Star Sports Events Management Group, will be held in Manila at the Robinson's Galleria from May 28-30.

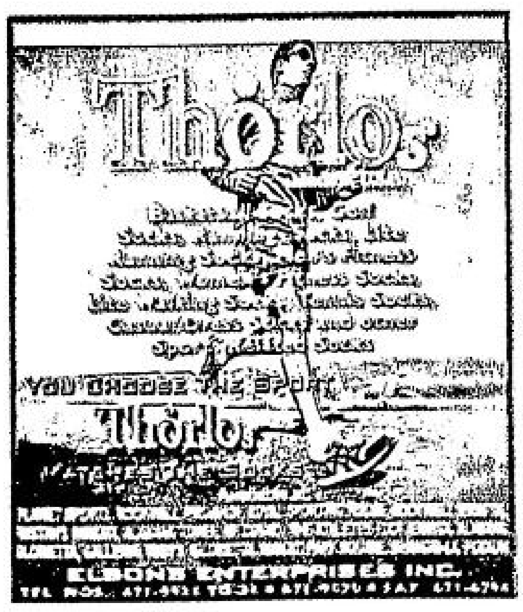
SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: 2004 NBA Playoffs-Pistons vs Nets, Game 3, Eastern Semifinals; 8 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—The scene shifts to the Continental Airlines Arena as New Jersey hosts Detroit.

NBA Greatest Games-Sixers vs L'akers, Game 4, 1983 Finals; 11 a.m.; Solar Sports—Philadelphia's Dr. J takes over as he scores seven points late in the game to push the Sixers to victory, 115-108.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



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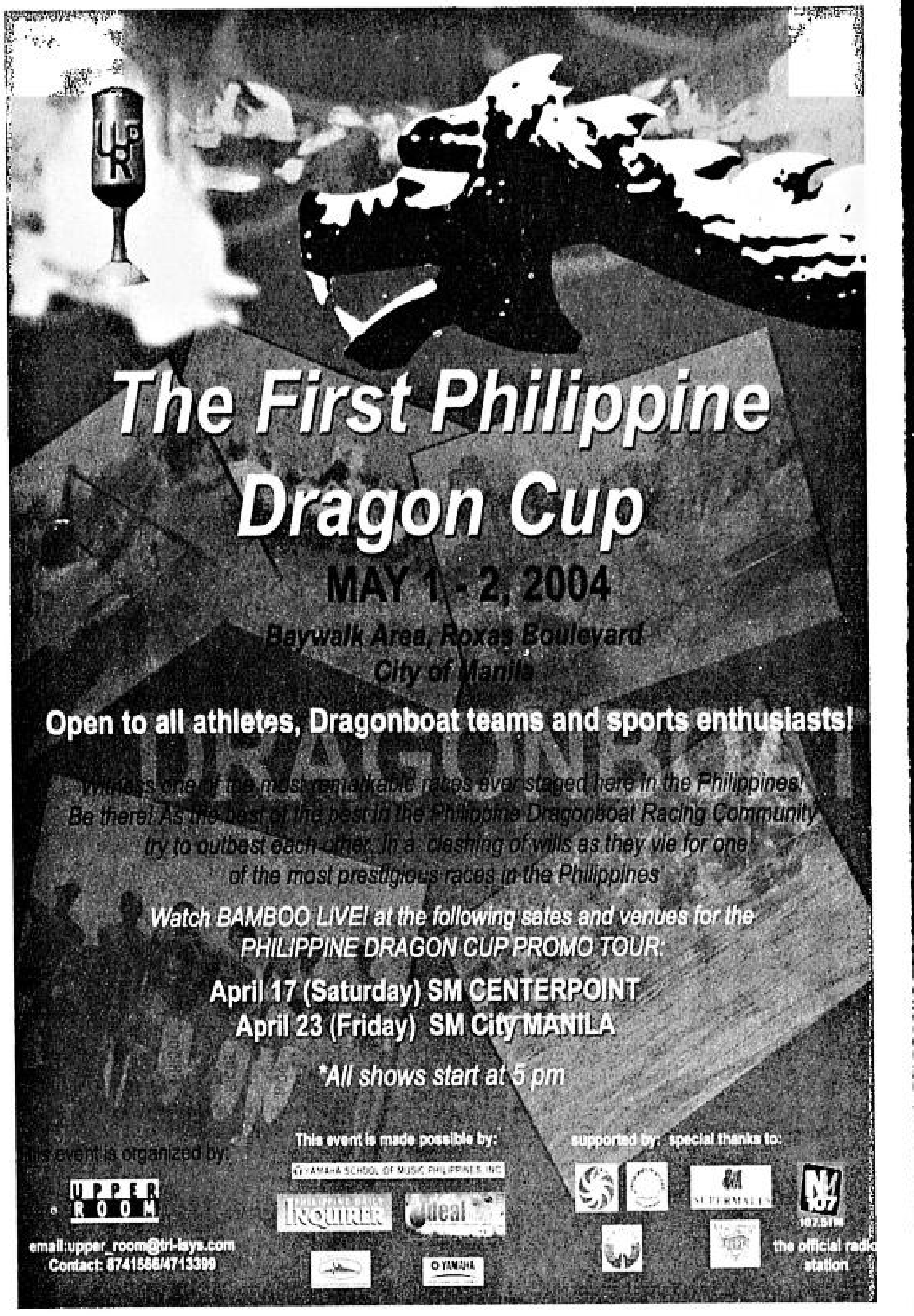

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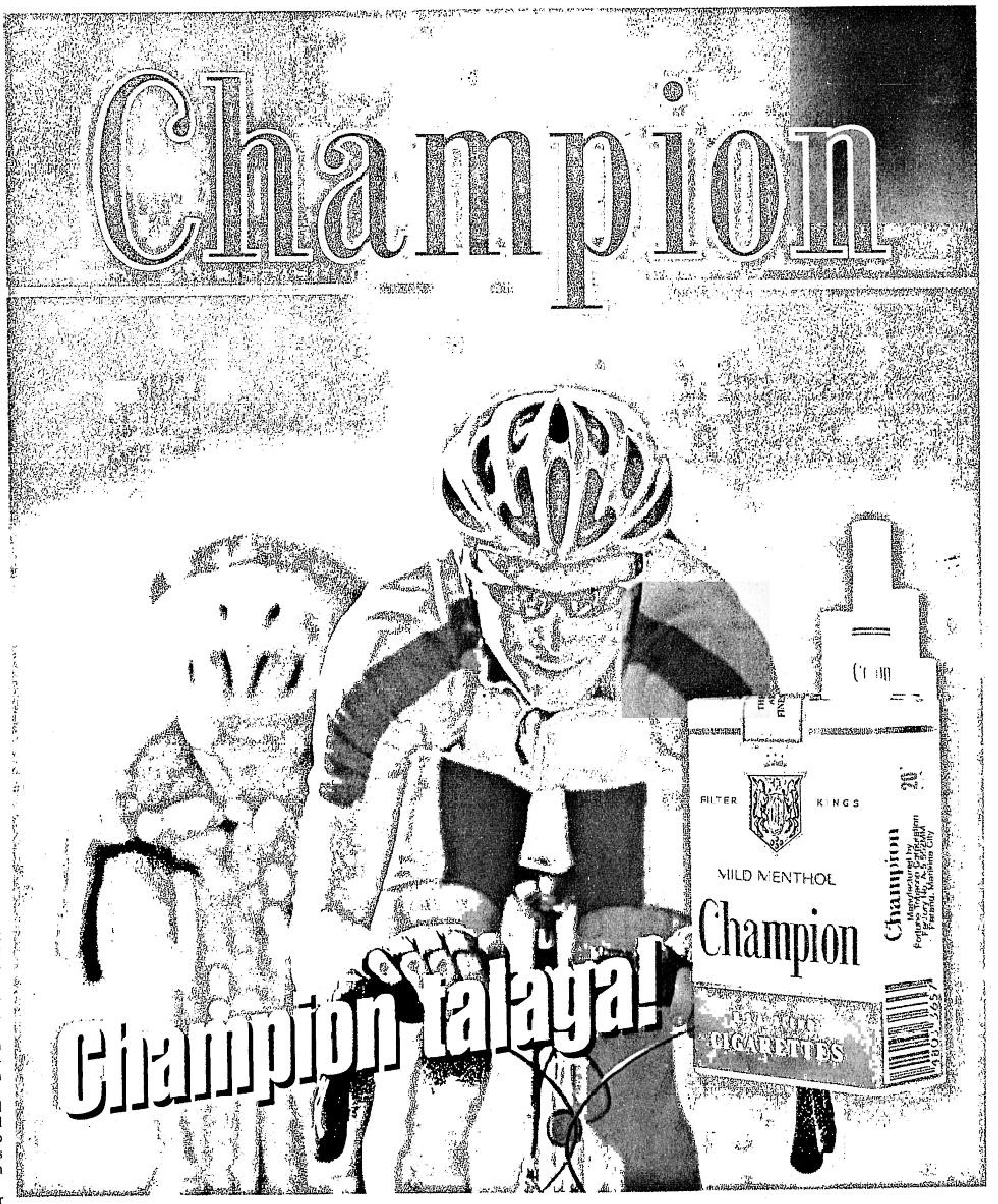

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Rookie joins Tañamor in Asian boxing q'finals

KARACHI, Pakistan—The youngest of the four-man RP-Alaxan FR boxing team fought like a grizzled veteran.

Nineteen-year-old Jennibert Basadre outclassed Dipendra Maharjan of Nepal, 24-10, to earn a quarterfinal seat in the 3rd Asian Olympic boxing qualifying tournament (Green Hill Cup) at the heavily secured KPT Sports Complex here.

Jabbing and moving for most of the four-round contest, the Philippine Army bet dominated Maharjan in their 60-kg (lightweight) division match and joined flyweight Harry Tañamor in the next round of the meet that attracted 133 boxers from 29 countries.

The two fought for semifinal berths late yesterday afternoon.

Tañamor took on Kazakhstan's Abdraimov Nurlan in a 48-kg quarterfinal bout while Basadre battled Malaysian Adnan Yusoh, who beat Djuraev Khurshed of Tajikistan, 25-20.

But RP coach George Caliwan, assisted by Pat Gaspi, still rued the questionable loss suffered by featherweight Junard Ladon against Japanese Terukado Shoyama, 20-33.

Ferdie Gamo earlier lost his preliminary round bout against Vietnam Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Worapoj Petchkoom of Thailand, 23-12, in the 54-kg (bantamweight) class.

Manny Lopez, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) president, encouraged the two remaining fighters of the team supported by Alaxan-FR, Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Pacific Heights and Accel to give their best as the weeklong tournament serving as Asia's final Olympic boxing qualifying event reaches its halfway mark.

"I believe in the abilities of our boxers and I know they will give their best for our country," said Lopez.

Basadre's match and the rest of the 19 bouts scheduled for the day was delayed for more than an hour as security was tightened around the playing venue in the wake of a bombing incident that rocked this Muslim capital.

But the lanky Filipino hardly showed signs of apprehension as he was all business during the fight.

"We asked him to just relax," Gaspi said.

Of the 62 Olympic berths allotted for Asia, 44 had already been clinched, three of which by Filipinos Violito Payla, Romeo Brin and Chris Camat.

Eighteen more slots are being disputed in the home of International Amateur Boxing Federation (Aiba) president Anwar Chowdry.

Realtors still hot, outgun Phone Pals

By June Navarro

GAMES WEDNESDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
4:45 p.m.—San Miguel vs Alaska
7:10 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Ginebra

STA. LUCIA Realty caught Talk 'N Text napping in the third quarter and went on to hammer out a 114-104 victory last night in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Derrick Brown relentlessly torched the hoops for 42 points, 12 of them coming in the pivotal third period as the Realtors cut loose from a tightly fought encounter.

On a hot streak, the Realtors nailed their third victory in a row and seventh in 15 games, increasing their chances for a twice-to-beat advantage in the wildcard phase of the eliminations.

"We're crossing our fingers. I hope we can make it in the top 4. To make it happen, we have to maintain our focus and the same level of intensity in the coming games," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua.

The Realtors need to sweep their last three games in the elimination round to clinch the fourth spot going into the playoffs.

"We'll pray that teams on top of the standings falter to keep our chances alive," said Chua, whose Realtors are looking to beat Barangay Ginebra, FedEx and Shell to wrap up their elimination campaign.

Despite the setback, the Phone Pals clung to fourth place with an 8-7 win-loss record, a full game behind Coca-Cola and Alaska (9-5).

Jerald Honeycutt erupted for 40 points and grabbed 17 rebounds while Asi Taulava also had a double-double (18 points, 11 rebounds) for the Phone Pals, who failed to stop Paolo Mendoza's timely sniping when it counted most.

Mendoza sizzled from the outside, hitting five of 10 three-point attempts, including several momentum-breaking jumpers at the height of the Phone Pals' comeback in the last period.

He finished with 20 points behind the 22 of Dennis Espino. The only other Realtor to score in the last quarter aside from Brown, Mendoza and Espino was Marlou Aquino, who wound up with 16.

Mendoza's triple broke a mild uprising by the Phone Pals and gave the Realtors a 97-78 cushion going into the final stretch. Another looping Mendoza shot stopped a mighty 18-8 attack by the Phone Pals, 104-92.

Aside from unleashing a potent offense that had the Realtors scoring their biggest output in almost seven years, Chua and his wards succeeded in pushing Honeycutt away from the shaded area.

"We forced him (Honeycutt) to shoot from the outside instead of hammering us in the paint. That left us with only Taulava to contend with," said Chua.

The scores:

First Game

STA. LUCIA 114—Brown 42, Espino 22, Mendoza 20, Aquino 16, Adriano 5, Francisco 5, Duremdes 4, Victolero 0, Ong 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 104—Honeycutt 40, Taulava 18, Alapag 17, Pablo 17, Miller 6, De Ocampo 4, Fran 2, Salangsang 0, Ravena 0, Belano 0.

Quarters: 33-28, 56-54, 84-66, 114-104.

REALTORS
PHONE PALS
11
18

WILLIE Miller of Talk 'N Text drives off Sta. Lucia's Espino during a brief TNT offensive in the second quarter.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Epson summer badminton camp on

THE EPSON Summer Badminton Camp kicks off today with hundreds of shuttlecock enthusiasts expected to troop to the Pioneer Badminton Club in Mandaluyong City.

Camp director Eg Lim will supervise the camp along with former national teammates Steven Yan and Malvin Alcala in the event sponsored by Epson, Regatta, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-lite.

Lim said the participants would learn the fundamentals of the sport and improve their motor skills aside from gaining knowledge of the rules of the game, court discipline and etiquette.

Training modules will also be prepared for the participants to give them the feel of actual competition and practice what they have learned during the camp, which runs until May 31. Interested parties may call 7460828 or 6385343.

Pioneer Badminton Club's Edmin Tarriela said the first batch in the Epson Summer Badminton Camp had shown great improvement as far as skill level is concerned.

Tarriela added Epson would organize a mini-tournament for the camp participants to see how they fare after going through the training sessions under the tutelage of Lim, Alcala and Yan.

Modified scramble format for Ateneo, La Salle golf meet

WHAT used to be a competitive round becomes a friendly meeting when the Ateneo-La Salle Golf Fellowship is held on Saturday, June 5, at the four championship courses of the sprawling Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Carrying the theme "Stronger Together," the event will feature one player from each school forming a team and competing for honors in four different divisions.

The two-man modified scramble format that will be used is expected to put more excitement into the chase for division honors and stress the importance of teamwork.

Under the format, both team members will hit separate tee shots. They will then choose their best drive and will follow this sequence until they hit the green. But as soon as they are on the green, the putting sequence will be on alternate basis, with the player whose ball was not selected putting first.

Interested parties may call Jun Dalandan at the Ateneo alumni office at 426608; Ateneo High School Batch '79 through Maureen Guerrero 6365612; Jonette Imperial 5236158, 5265612 or at the LSGHAA 7212729 through Ludy Bautista.

SAMSUNG TOUR

Villaroman, Olives gain national finals

JUST a month after topping their respective divisions in the national finals, Carmelette Villaroman and Marco Olives secured their slots for next year's championship by posting contrasting 36-hole victories Friday in the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Legends course of Manila Southwoods.

National team mainstay Villaroman was just too good for the ladies Class A field with her steady rounds of 70-70 (140) giving her an 11-stroke win over Debbie de Villa, who scored 74-77 (151).

Olives scored 81-76 (157) then beat Adrian Mauricio 87-80 (157) in the countback for the men's Class B plum.

Paulina Sotto, the jungolfer-daughter of comedian-TV host Vic, was also among the winners after she topped ladies Class B with her 78-78 (156). She won by a stroke over De Villa's elder sister, Linnel.

The other men's division winners were IG Gutierrez in Class A, Archie Lava in Class C and Lee Hua Jun in Class D. Rita Dalisay took the ladies C plum in the tourney co-sponsored by adidas TaylorMade, Tokyo Tokyo, Pink Patio Boracay, Rogin-E, Coppertone Sport, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Gatorade and official carrier Philippine Airlines.

Kim Chang Hoi had earlier ruled the 72-hole championship division by a stroke over Mike Bibat.

Gutierrez, playing out of Riviera, scored 72-80 for 152 and was a six-shot win over Rodel Mangulabnan, Lava had 88-90 for 178 for a two-stroke win over Jose Mendoza while Lee's 100-88 was good for a three-shot win over Romy Ignacio.

Dalisay got a spot in the national finals like the rest of the winners when she beat Teresa Arevalo by five with her scores of 98-99 (197).

The Tour next goes to Sta. Elena which will be a two-part leg. The championship division will be played from May 25-28 while the rest of the divisions will be staged on June 1-4.

From Sta. Elena, the third leg will be played at Cagayan de Oro on July 1-4.

For inquiries, entries may call the PSMG at 6350010 or 6315768.

Olympic-bound Jethro to train with marksmen down under

DIONISIO, the three-time world practical shooting champ, now shines in trap.

TRAP shooter Jethro Dionisio leaves for Australia shortly to train with world-class Aussie marksmen and coaches in preparation for his first Olympic Games stint in Athens this August.

The 32-year-old Dionisio, who earned a wildcard slot in Athens, is excited as he faces the toughest challenge in his shooting career.

"I'm happy to earn the trip to Athens," said Dionisio, a three-time world champion when he was still a practical pistol campaigner. "But I have to work hard because I will compete against the world's best."

Since he shifted to trap shooting in 2000, Dionisio has already made big strides in the sport. He bagged an individual silver medal in the 2001 Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur, another individual silver in the 2002 Asian clay shooting championships in Bangkok, an individual and team bronze in the 2002 Busan Asian Games, and a team gold medal in the Hanoi SEAG last December.

Shooting association president Arturo Macapagal expects Dionisio to perform well in Athens.

Sabal tops Greenhills 5-miler

VETERAN runners Cresenciano Sabal and Gloria Diaz yesterday ruled the Greenhills Running Club 5-Mile Classic at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan, Metro Manila.

The 26-year-old Sabal, an enlisted man in the Philippine Army, clocked 29 minutes and 34 seconds to edge 23-year-old Jujet de Asis by three seconds. Last year's champion, Reynaldo delos Reyes, finished third in 29:45.

"*Nagpalitan lang kami ng trangko ni Delos Reyes pero pagdating dito sa last* 400 meters, *hinataw ko na*," said Sabal, who also ruled the 10-K Patakbo Para sa Sta. Clara in Pasig City the other day.

Diaz completed the race in 35 minutes and 53 seconds. Diaz and Liza Delfin trailed 16-year-old Sealand Agana early in the race. But going into the final turn, the 28-year-old Diaz outsprinted her two rivals to claim her second consecutive title in this race sponsored by Procter and Gamble and held in partnership with the Greenhills Shopping Center, Nike, Milo, Centrum and the Lucio Tan Group of Companies.

Delfin placed second in 36:39 while Agana settled for third in 36:53. Sabal and Diaz each pocketed the P5,000 top purse, a new pair of Nike shoes and a trophy in the event organized by Rudy Biscocho.

Meanwhile, 48-year-old Arnie Espedido and 44-year-old Basilisa Cruz captured the 41-50 age-group category.

Kart kids show stuff May 15-16

YOUNGSTERS, led by Ayrton Cuesta and Roman Academia, flash their promising skills when the 2004 Shell Karting Superseries stages its third leg on May 15-16 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Cuesta seeks his third straight victory in the Cadet 85 class against Alessandra Madrigal in this event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell, Bridgestone, Aviva Insurance, Eastway Motorcycle Racing and Denso Iridium Power.

Academia likewise looks forward to another impressive win in the Cadet 60 class against tough rivals Javey Benitez, Ton Joson, Rafael Benito and Kahlil Demaisip.

But much of the attention will be on the combined Formula Rotax Max Expert and Novice race where a banner field of 22 karters are entered in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP).

Mike Tuason of Tuason Racing-Addict Mobile will be gunning for his third win but expects a tough race against Marcel Thenu, Manny Sy of Primus Racedevils, Lee Bumgarner of M&M Racing and Archie Rubio.

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Rookie joins Tañamor in Asian boxing q'finals

KARACHI, Pakistan—The youngest of the four-man RP-Alaxan FR boxing team fought like a grizzled veteran.

Nineteen-year-old Jennibert Basadre outclassed Dipendra Maharjan of Nepal, 24-10, to earn a quarterfinal seat in the 3rd Asian Olympic boxing qualifying tournament (Green Hill Cup) at the heavily secured KPT Sports Complex here.

Jabbing and moving for most of the four-round contest, the Philippine Army bet dominated Maharjan in their 60-kg (lightweight) division match and joined flyweight Harry Tañamor in the next round of the meet that attracted 133 boxers from 29 countries.

The two fought for semifinal berths late yesterday afternoon.

Tañamor took on Kazakhstan's Abdraimov Nurlan in a 48-kg quarterfinal bout while Basadre battled Malaysian Adnan Yusoh, who beat Djuraev Khurshed of Tajikistan, 25-20.

But RP coach George Caliwan, assisted by Pat Gaspi, still rued the questionable loss suffered by featherweight Junard Ladon against Japanese Terukado Shoyama, 20-33.

Ferdie Gamo earlier lost his preliminary round bout against Vietnam Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Worapoj Petchkoom of Thailand, 23-12, in the 54-kg (bantamweight) class.

Manny Lopez, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) president, encouraged the two remaining fighters of the team supported by Alaxan-FR, Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Pacific Heights and Accel to give their best as the weeklong tournament serving as Asia's final Olympic boxing qualifying event reaches its halfway mark.

"I believe in the abilities of our boxers and I know they will give their best for our country," said Lopez.

Basadre's match and the rest of the 19 bouts scheduled for the day was delayed for more than an hour as security was tightened around the playing venue in the wake of a bombing incident that rocked this Muslim capital.

But the lanky Filipino hardly showed signs of apprehension as he was all business during the fight.

"We asked him to just relax," Gaspi said.

Of the 62 Olympic berths allotted for Asia, 44 had already been clinched, three of which by Filipinos Violito Payla, Romeo Brin and Chris Camat.

Eighteen more slots are being disputed in the home of International Amateur Boxing Federation (Aiba) president Anwar Chowdry.

Realtors still hot, outgun Phone Pals

By June Navarro

STA. LUCIA Realty caught Talk 'N Text napping in the third quarter and went on to hammer out a 114-104 victory last night in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Derrick Brown relentlessly torched the hoops for 42 points, 12 of them coming in the pivotal third period as the Realtors cut loose from a tightly fought encounter.

On a hot streak, the Realtors nailed their third victory in a row and seventh in 15 games, increasing their chances for a twice-to-beat advantage in the wildcard phase of the eliminations.

"We're crossing our fingers. I hope we can make it in the top 4. To make it happen, we have to maintain our focus and the same level of intensity in the coming games," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua.

The Realtors need to sweep their last three games in the elimination round to clinch the fourth spot going into the playoffs.

"We'll pray that teams on top of the standings falter to keep our chances alive," said Chua, whose Realtors are looking to beat Barangay Ginebra, FedEx and Shell to wrap up their elimination campaign.

Despite the setback, the Phone Pals clung to fourth place with an 8-7 win-loss record, a full game behind Coca-Cola and Alaska (9-5).

Jerald Honeycutt erupted for 40 points and grabbed 17 rebounds while Asi Taulava also had a double-double (18 points, 11 rebounds) for the Phone Pals, who failed to stop Paolo Mendoza's timely sniping when it counted most.

GAMES WEDNESDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*

4:45 p.m.—San Miguel vs Alaska

7:10 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Ginebra

Mendoza sizzled from the outside, hitting five of 10 three-point attempts, including several momentum-breaking jumpers at the height of the Phone Pals' comeback in the last period.

He finished with 20 points behind the 22 of Dennis Espino. The only other Realtor to score in the last quarter aside from Brown, Mendoza and Espino was Marlou Aquino, who wound up with 16.

Mendoza's triple broke a mild uprising by the Phone Pals and gave the Realtors a 97-78 cushion going into the final stretch. Another looping Mendoza shot stopped a mighty 18-8 attack by the Phone Pals, 104-92.

Aside from unleashing a potent offense that had the Realtors scoring their biggest output in almost seven years, Chua and his wards succeeded in pushing Honeycutt away from the shaded area.

"We forced him (Honeycutt) to shoot from the outside instead of hammering us in the paint. That left us with only Taulava to contend with," said Chua.

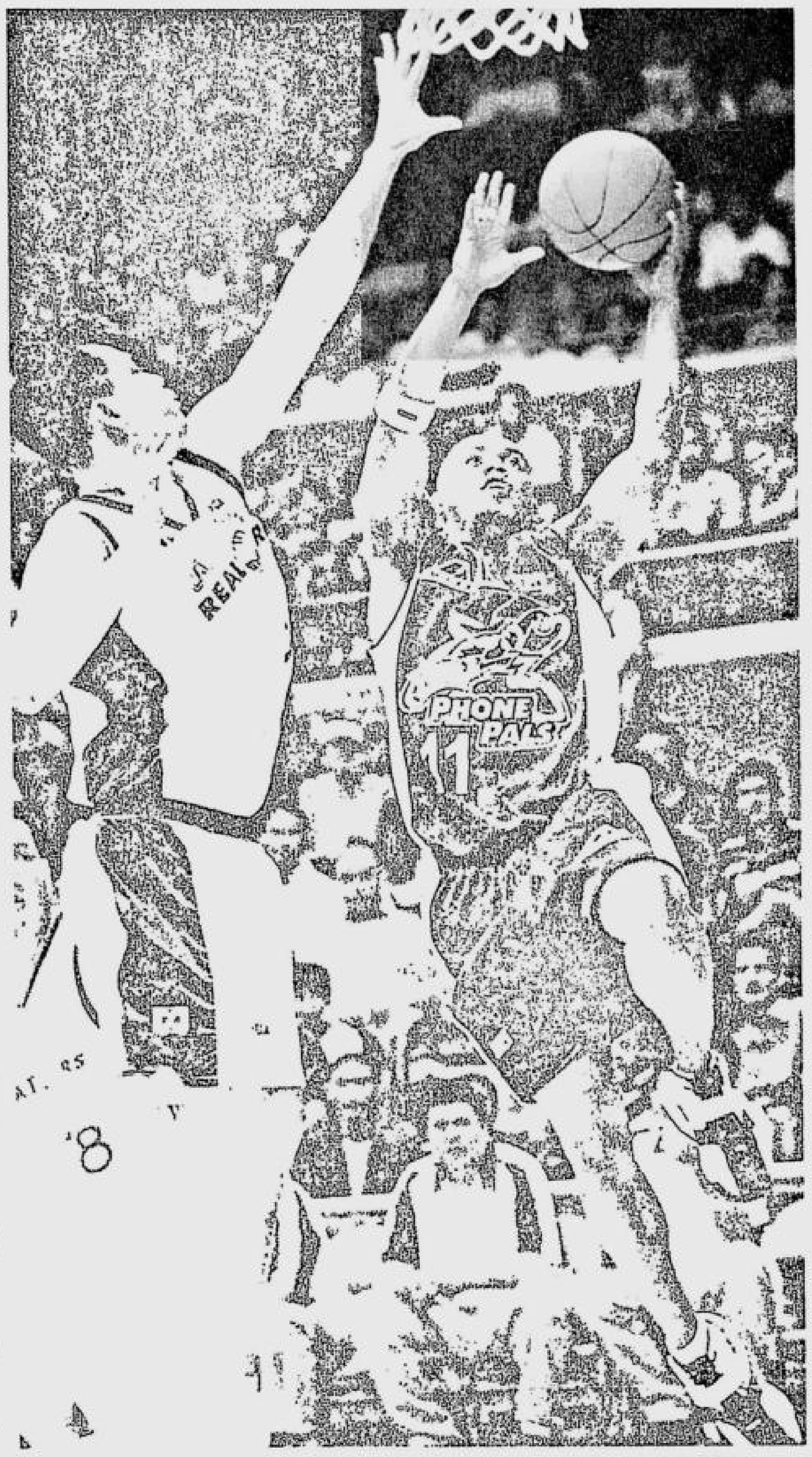
The scores:

First Game

STA. LUCIA 114– Brown 42, Espino [illegible] Mendoza 20, Aquino 16, Adriano 5, Francisco [illegible] ndes 4, Victolero 0, Ong 0

TALK 'N TEXT 104 - Honeycutt 40, Taulava 18, Alapag 17, Pablo [illegible] Miller 6, De Ocampo 4, [illegible] Salamsang 0, Ravena 0, Bolano [illegible]

Quarters 33-28, 56-54, 84-66, 114-104



WILLIE Miller of Talk 'N Text drives off Sta. Lucia's Espino during a brief TNT offensive in the second quarter.

Epson summer badminton camp on

THE EPSON Summer Badminton Camp kicks off today with hundreds of shuttlecock enthusiasts expected to troop to the Pioneer Badminton Club in Mandaluyong City.

Camp director Eg Lim will supervise the camp along with former national teammates Steven Yan and Malvin Alcala in the event sponsored by Epson, Regatta, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-lite.

Lim said the participants would learn the fundamentals of the sport and improve their motor skills aside from gaining knowledge of the rules of the game, court discipline and etiquette.

Training modules will also be prepared for the participants to give them the feel of actual competition and practice what they have learned during the camp, which runs until May 31. Interested parties may call 7460828 or 6385343.

Pioneer Badminton Club's Edmin Tarriela said the first batch in the Epson Summer Badminton Camp had shown great improvement as far as skill level is concerned.

Tarriela added Epson would organize a mini-tournament for the camp participants to see how they fare after going through the training sessions under the tutelage of Lim, Alcala and Yan.

Modified scramble format for Ateneo, La Salle golf meet

WHAT used to be a competitive round becomes a friendly meeting when the Ateneo-La Salle Golf Fellowship is held on Saturday, June 5, at the four championship courses of the sprawling Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Carrying the theme "Stronger Together, the event will feature one player from each school forming a team and competing for honors in four different divisions.

The two-man modified scramble format that will be used is expected to put more excitement into the chase for division honors and stress the importance of teamwork.

Under the format, both team members will hit separate tee shots. They will then choose their best drive and will follow this sequence until they hit the green. But as soon as they are on the green, the putting sequence will be on alternate basis, with the player whose ball was not selected putting first.

Interested parties may call Jun Dalandan at the Ateneo alumni office at 426608, Ateneo High School Batch '79 through Maureen Guerrero 6365612; Jonette Imperial 5236158, 5265612 or at the LSGHAA 7212729 through Lady Bautista.

SAMSUNG TOUR

Villaroman, Olives gain national finals

JUST a month after topping their respective divisions in the national finals, Carmelette Villaroman and Marco Olives secured their slots for next year's championship by posting contrasting 36-hole victories Friday in the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Legends course of Manila Southwoods.

National team mainstay Villaroman was just too good for the ladies Class A field with her steady rounds of 70-70 (140) giving her an 11-stroke win over Debbie de Villa, who scored 74-77 (151).

Olives scored 81-76 (157) then beat Adrian Mauricio 87-80 (157) in the countback for the men's Class B plum.

Paulina Sotto, the jungolfer-daughter of comedian-TV host Vic, was also among the winners after she topped ladies Class B with her 78-78 (156). She won by a stroke over De Villa's elder sister, Linnel.

The other men's division winners were IG Gutierrez in Class A, Archie Lava in Class C and Lee Hua Jun in Class D. Rita Dalisay took the ladies C plum in the tourney co-sponsored by adidas TaylorMade, Tokyo Tokyo, Pink Patio Boracay, Ro[illegible], Coppertone Sport, KZG by Custom Club makers, Gatorade and official [illegible] Philippine Airlines.

Kim Chang Hoi had earlier ruled the 72-hole championship division by a stroke over Mike Bibat.

Gutierrez, playing out of Riviera, scored 72-80 for 152 and was a six-shot winner over Rodel Mangulabnan, Lava had 88-90 for 178 for a two-stroke win over Jose Mendoza while Lee's 100-88 was good for a three-shot win over Romy Ignacio.

Da[illegible] a spot in the national finals like the rest of the winners when she beat Teresa Areva[illegible] by five with her scores of 98-99 (197).

The Tour next goes to Sta. Elena which will be a two-part leg. The championship division will be played from May 25-28 while the [illegible] of the divisions will be staged on June 1-4.

From Sta. Elena, the third leg will be played at Cagayan de Oro on July 1-4.

For inquiries, entries may call the PSMG at 6350010 or 6315768.

Olympic-bound Jethro to train with marksmen down under

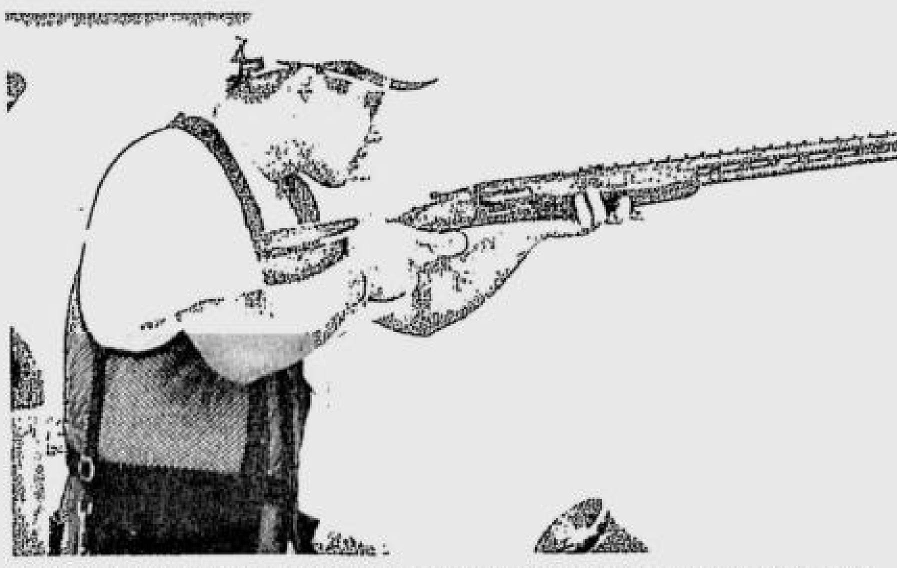
TRAP shooter Jethro Dionisio [illegible] for Australia shortly to train with world-class [illegible] marksmen and coaches [illegible] preparation for his first Olympic Games stint in Athens this August.

The [illegible] year old Dionisio, who earn[illegible] wildcard slot in Athens [illegible] excited as he [illegible] toughest chal[illegible] [illegible] hooting ca[illegible]

[illegible] ppy [illegible] earn the [illegible] d Dionisio [illegible] worth [illegible] ch [illegible] w [illegible] campaign.

"B[illegible] work hard [illegible] compet[illegible] [illegible] hifted [illegible] ap [illegible] 2000, Dionisio has [illegible] ady [illegible] de big stride in the sport. He [illegible] medal in the 2001 Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur, another individual silver in the 2002 Asian [illegible] shooting champi[illegible]onships in Bangkok, an individual and team bronze in the 2002 Busan Asian Games, and a team gold medal in the Hanoi SEAG last December.

Shooting [illegible] ssociation president Arturo Macapagal expects Dionisio to perform well in Athens.



DIONISIO, the three-time world practical shooting champ, now shines in trap.

Sabal tops Greenhills 5-miler

VETERAN ru[illegible] s [illegible] ano Sabal and Gloria Diaz yesterday [illegible] the Greenhills Running Club 5-Mile C[illegible] at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan, Metro Manila.

The 26-year-old Sabal, an enlisted man in the Philippine Army, clocked 29 minutes and 34 seconds to edge [illegible] old Juget de Asis by three seconds. Last year [illegible] champion, Reynaldo delos Reyes finished t[illegible] 29:45.

"Nagpalitan ka[illegible] ng trangko ni Delos Reyes [illegible] o pagdating di[illegible] la[illegible] 400 meters, hinataw ko na," said Sabal, who also ruled the 10-K Patakbo Para sa Sta. Clara in Pasig City the other day.

Diaz completed the race in 35 minutes and 5[illegible] seconds. Diaz and Liza Delfin trailed 16-year-old Sealand Agana early in the race. But going into the final turn, the 28-year-old Diaz outsprinted her two rivals to claim her second consecutive title in this race sponsored by Procter and Gamble and held in partnership with the Greenhills Shopping Center, Nike, Milo, Centrum and Lucio Tan Group of Companies.

Delfin placed second in 36:39 while Agana settled for third in 36:53. Sabal and Diaz each pocketed the P5,000 top purse, a new pair of Nike shoes and a trophy in the event organized by Rudy Biscocho.

Meanwhile, 48-year-old Arnie Espedido and 44-year-old Basilisa Cruz captured the 41-50 age-group category.

Kart kids show stuff May 15-16

YOUNGSTERS [illegible] by Ayrton Cuesta and Roman Academia [illegible] their promising skills when the 2004 Shell Karting Superseries stages its third leg on May 15-16 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Cuesta [illegible] ird straight victory in the [illegible] against Alessandro Madrigal in the event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell, Bridgestone, Ave[illegible] Insurance, Eastway Motorcycle Racing and De[illegible] Iri[illegible] in Power [illegible] Academ[illegible] look forwa[illegible] anothe[illegible] tough rivals Javey Benitez, Ton Jose, Rafael Benito and Kahlil Demaisip.

But much of the attention will be on the combined Formula Rotax Max Expert and Novice race where a banner field of 22 karters are entered in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP).

Mike Tuason of Tuason Racing-Addict Mobile will be gunning for his third win but expect tough race against Marcel Thenu, Manny Sy of Primus Racedevils, Lee Bumgarner of M&M Racing and Archie Rubio.

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Jenny seeks 2nd straight crown

WHEN Jennifer Rosales won her first title last week, she had to overcome a four-stroke deficit in the final round and advance all the way from 14th place to the top of the final standings.

Still in a winning mood, Rosales tees off Sunday for the last 18 holes of the $2.2 million LPGA Michelob Open in Williamsburg, Virginia staring at a three-stroke deficit and still tied for fourth place despite a struggling effort of two-over-par 73 in aturday's third round.

The PLDT Global and American Eye Center endorser in the LPGA stood at 209 in a tie with second round frontrunner Kim Williams, just three shots adrift of new leaders Lorena Ochoa of Mexico and American Cristie Kerr.

Ochoa, who had played against Rosales in the Junior World in San Diego, saved par on the last hole by sinking a 35-foot putt for her second straight 3-under-par 68 while Kerr carded a 70 to grab a share of the lead at 206.

Christina Kim was in third at 208 after a 73.

Rosales fought swirling winds to score two birdies against four bogeys. The others were just not ready for the conditions.

Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin scored only a 74 but still improved to a tie for 42nd at 218.

Ochoa is the only player in the field with three rounds under par.

"As soon as I hit it and it starts turning right, you knew it was in the hole," Ochoa said. "So it was really a good feeling and very exciting and I know I am going to sleep much better with that stroke," she said of her last-hole par.

Ochoa, Kerr and Kim will play in the final threesome while Rosales will join Williams and Korean Se Ri Pak, who shared sixth spot with Wendy Doolan and Juli Inkster at 209.

Ochoa began the day seven strokes behind American Kim Williams but steadily rose to the lead as many around her faltered on the Kingsmill Resort and Spa course.

No one fell faster than Williams, whose sparkling 63 on Friday was blown away by an ugly 7-over 78 that turned her four-stroke cushion into a three-shot hole.

Ochoa's mom and dad were worried but she told them to relax.

"I talked to my parents this morning," Ochoa said. "I told them, 'Don't get scared because of the scores because they are going to be a lot higher. I knew that the greens are harder now, as well as quicker."

In addition to successfully navigating the wind, Ochoa and Kerr had more in common. They were the only golfers to birdie the par-3 fifth hole Saturday. They also tied for second here last year.

"I think what happened last year was a really good learning experience for me," said Ochoa, who is looking for her first career win. "I will try to take advantage of that and hopefully make good decisions tomorrow and play good."

Rosales won last week's Chick-fil-A Charity Championship and was seventh here last year.

Barte tops No.1 seed Dandan, takes title

THIRD seed Ralph Kevin Barte pulled off a 3-6, 7-5, 7-5 upset win over second seed Kyle Joshua Dandan yesterday to capture the boys' 18-under title in the Truflex National Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

"I told myself to just hang on and keep on fighting," said Barte, who beat Dandan for the first time in four meetings.

Barte had earlier won his third 16-under title, hacking out a 6-3, 6-0 decision over second seed Raymond Villarete.

Seventh seed Francis Casey Alcantara stunned fourth seed Joshua Tan Ho, 6-1, 6-1, for the boys' 14-under title. In the 12-under division, the fifth-ranked

Alcantara shocked No. 1 Akio Hari Ong Sy, 6-2, 6-1, for the title.

In the unisex 10-under division, second seed Sally Mae Siso won the title over fourthseed Tim Polero, 6-1, 6-2.

In the girls division, second seed Alyssa Labay rallied past third seed Kristel Samala, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1, to pocket the 18-under title

Top seed Bambi Zoleta of Lucena City won the 16-under title over second seed Jessica Marie Agra, 7-5, 7-6 (7-5). Zoleta annexed the 14-under title after posting a 6-0, 6-0 win over third seed Zhane Quitara.

Quitara kept her winning streak in the 12-under division, beating sixth seed Sally Mae Siso, 6-1, 2-6, 6-0, for her third consecutive title.

Bataan jins cop 3 golds in Petron tilt

BATAAN jins sparkled in the 2004 Petron New Face of the Year taekwondo championships recently by bagging three senior men's gold medals at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Finweight Noel Lopez, fly Rohel Roga and bantam Marlon Almamento produced Bataan's golds, beating MHS' Carlito Cortez, Letran's Angel Ong and Naga's Rowell Pabico, respectively.

The other men's senior gold medalists were feather Sherwin Legaspi of The Gym (Imus) and heavyweight Hans Anderson of Don Bosco Mandaluyong.

Finweight Anabel Adviento of DLSU and bantam/light Conie Recio of New Age Gym emerged as the only senior women's gold winners:

The other gold medalists:

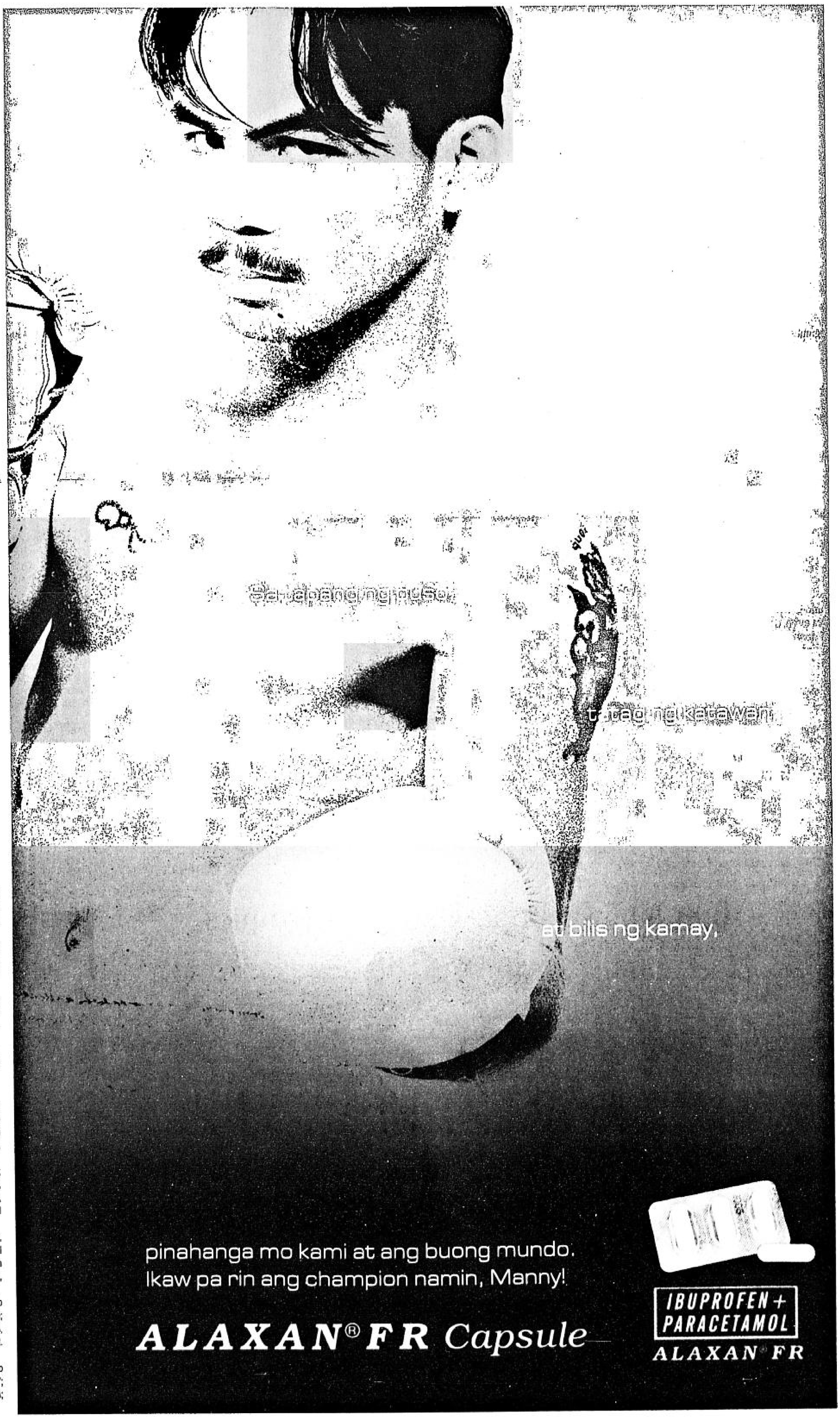
Junior men (novice)—Resty Taguinod, Cagayan, fin/fly; Carlo Predecules, King Tiger, bantam; Jesil Arsenio, Hwarang TKD, feather; Jordan Panayas, Rising Dragon, light; Gadi Castillo, Bulacan, welter; Zach Martin, St. Benedict College, middle/heavy.

Junior men (advance)—Zardy Bautista, Teamsport, fin/fly; Jovit Advincula, Bulacan, bantam; Dux Batangan, Teamsport, feather; Allan Obenza, PCU, light; Christian Los Baños, Hwarang, welter; John Paul Fontejon, Rizal, middle; Miguel Ruiz, NTU Tigers, heavy.

Mid-junior men (novice)—Kenneth Maloles, King Tigers, fin; Samuel Morrison, King Tiger-Olongapo, fly; John Paul Valdez, Cagayan, bantam; Gabriel Angelo Gonzales, Wesleyan U, feather; Kerwin Mariano, Camiling, light; Lawrenece Chua, St. Benedict, welter/heavy.

Mid-junior men (advance)—Lyndon Fabla, Rizal, fin; Anjo Simon, Isabela, fly; ustin de Larrazabal, Bacolod, bantam; Chembeer Agaton, Rizal High, feather; Juancho Mendoza, CSA, ligt; Xavier Dempo, Bacoor, welter; Alfonso Luis Santillan, St. Benedict, middle/heavy.

Boys (novice)—Mael Sualiblos, Silang, 5 years old; Joko Luis Silverio, Bulacan, 6; David Joshua Jonas, Las Piñas, 7; Charles Andre Charo, Great Bodies Gym, 8-11, all group A; Manuel Luis Cuntapay, Flos Carmelli, Group B1.



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Spring, Cebu-GMC fives forge title clash

ILOILO CITY—Spring Cooking Oil-Laguna bounced back with fury Saturday to rip the Baguio Cardinals, 118-105, and barge into the finals of the Papasinic-Iloilo-NBC pre-season basketball series at the University of San Agustin gym here.

Nani Epondlan exploded for 35 points, including three triples after the final 3:21, to enable the Spring-Laguna team of shooting champ Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino to earn a title shot at Cebu-GMC, which subdued host Iloilo, 87-81, in the other game.

Spring-Laguna and reigning Cebu Basketball Federation President's Cup champion GMC were scheduled to dispute the title last night.

Sponsored by Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines, the tourney hosted by the Iloilo Basketball Federation serves as the final preview for the NBC national championship set to start late this month.

Scores:

FIRST GAME

SPRING 118—Epondulan 35, Sanz 19, Manuel 18, Soriano 10, Kalaw 9, Corbin 8, Caceres 8, Lingal 3, Garcia 2, Mendoza 2.

BAGUIO 105—Ton 22, Fontanilla 18, Mondina 15, Bona 13, Balares 13, Mapanao 8, Mendoza 7, Ancheta 5, Collado 4.

SECOND GAME

CEBU 87—Grijaldo 13, Lanete 13, Arellano 11, Saladaga 10, Concha 10, Ureal 6, Lozano 6, Cainglet 5, Mangubat 4, Mamba 3, Gabas 2.

ILOILO 81—Sayon 21, Allado 16, Marucot 11, Olaguer 11, Poral 11, Sinco 7, Guanco 2, Pido 2.

Tiger trips on 75, falls back by 5

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—World No. 1 Tiger Woods tumbled down the Wachovia Championship leaderboard after a three-over-par 75 dropped him five shots behind third-round pacesetter Arron Oberholser on Saturday.

Oberholser, 29, in his second year on the PGA Tour, moved into the lead with a four-under 68 and an 11-under total of 205.

Woods, who had been two strokes clear of the field following his 66 on Friday, slid to joint 11th place on 210.

Australian Geoff Ogilvy had one of the best rounds of the day, firing a 66 to vault into a tie for second with Notah Begay III (69), one shot behind Oberholser.

Jeff Maggert (67) was fourth on 207. Paraguay's Carlos Franco, Joey Sindelar, Australia's Stuart Appleby and first-round leader Kirk Triplett shared fifth on 208, eight under.

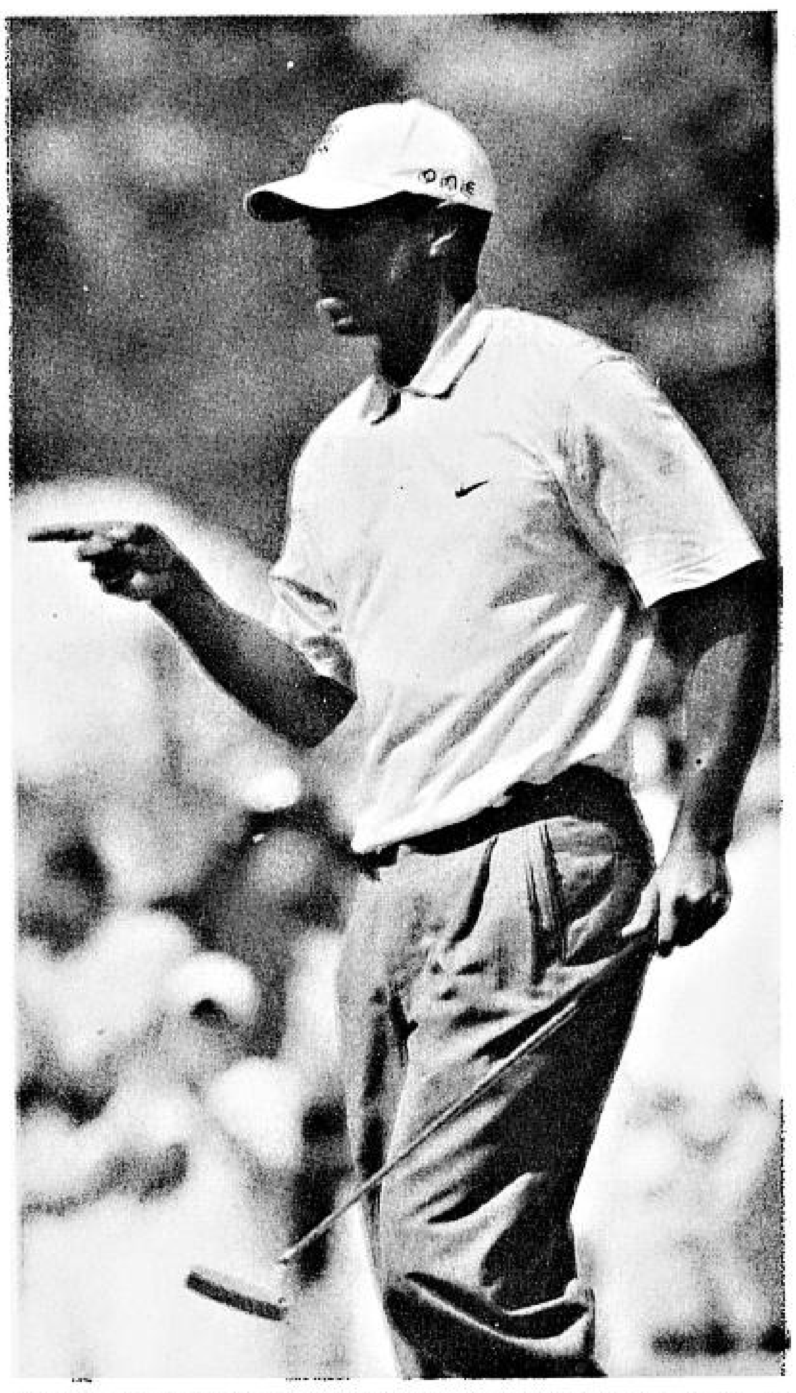
The Wachovia, which offers a prize of $1,008,000 to the winner, has attracted one of the strongest fields of the season, with five of the world's top six players appearing. None of the five, however, figured among the leaders after 54 holes.

Woods' problems at Quail Hollow Golf Club began when he bogeyed the opening hole. He followed with two more bogeys and a birdie to make the turn at 38. He also bogeyed the 12th before rallying with birdies at the 14th and 15th.

Following another dropped stroke at the 16th, Woods hung his tee shot at the 17th out to the left and found the water, leading to a double-bogey five.

He hit back with a birdie at the last but, coming after his 66 on Friday, it was an uncharacteristic turnaround.

Oberholser grabbed the 54-hole lead for the second time this season. He also shared top spot with Fiji's Vijay Singh entering the final round of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am only to record a 76 and finish in a tie for fifth place. *Reuters*



WOODS points to the hole after sinking his par putt on the ninth. AFP

Nat'l age group, juniors regular Fide events

THE NATIONAL Age Group Championships set May 21-25 and the National Junior Championship scheduled June 1-5 are officially registered with Fide in accordance with the regulations of the world chess body.

The age-group schedule does not match that of the duration of the tournament as earlier announced by a group in the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) led by secretary general Sammy Estimo and Grandmaster Eugene Torre.

Several parents and guardians of the junior chess players on Saturday called for a boycott of the age-group championships set on May 17-21.

The Fide confirmation of the two events as part of the official Philippine chess calendar was contained in a letter dated May 8, 2004, signed by Victoria Barinova of the Fide office and carried by Casto "Toti" Abundo, Fide delegate, when he arrived from Moscow the other night.

Abundo, the NCFP executive director, said the Fide-mandated age group tournament, to be held at the Tradehall, second floor, Starmall, Shaw Boulevard corner Edsa, will be a nine-round Swiss with under 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 categories for boys and girls.

Participants are required to present their birth certificates.

Those born in 1994 are eligible for the under 10, 1992 for the under 12, 1990 for under 14, 1988 for under 16, and 1986 for under 18.

The winner of each category is qualified to compete in the World Youth championship in Greece later this year.

Elo Mariano III is the defending champion for Under 14, Jodilyn Frona, the girl's defending champion for under 10, Sherilyn Cua, last year's champion for under 16 and RJ Magallanes are among the numerous registrants.

Entries from Cebu, Davao, Bohol, Cagayan de Oro, Angeles, Bulacan, Olongapo and other parts of the country are expected.

For registration and inquiries, please contact your NCFP secretariat at Room 517, Midland Plaza, M. Adriatico, Ermita Manila during office hours at (02) 8844, telefax (02) 5304269, through Butch Llamas.

TWO DATES: NCFP president Mat Defensor (left) and Primanila Realty & Development Corp. chair and CEO Eduardo S. Madrid (fifth from left) sign the agreement for the staging of the 2004 National Age-Group and National Junior Championships on May 17-21. Also in photo are Gm Torre, Primanila PRO Willy Quitiongco and NCFP secretary general Estimo.

Bomb blasts imperil Athens Olympics

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

TO a certain degree, I agree with Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit who said he was not worried by the recent bombings in Athens, venue of the Olympic Games on Aug. 13-29, adding that the host city can handle the security concerns in coordination with Europe, United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization authorities.

Bowling head and chief of mission Steve Hontiveros added Olympic organizers have assured the participating countries that the three bomb blasts, including the explosion in the Kalithea district, near hotels to be used by Olympic officials, were ``isolated cases and do not affect the Olympic preparations."

Still, the bombings left some athletes on edge, saying they are scared stiff because the specter of violence is now very much in the air whether or not these are isolated cases.

Security has always been a major concern of every Olympic organizing committee since the horrors of Munich in 1972 and Atlanta in 1996. And now Athens.

``I don't feel very secure," said one Athens-bound athlete who requested anonymity. But for others it was business as usual. ``We are here to train and play in the Olympics even if the host city will be a virtual fortress."

In Sydney, which hosted a trouble-free Olympics in 2000, Australian sports officials said they still planned to send a team to Athens but would ``never stand in the way of any athlete making a personal choice to stay away."

It was also reported that US Olympic officials have even obtained insurance just in case the Athens Games are canceled.

Since 1972 when Arab terrorists killed 11 Israel athletes and coaches at the Munich Games, Olympic organizers have been obsessed with security. In the Centennial Games in Atlanta in 1996, a pipe bomb containing nails and screws placed inside a green knapsack exploded in Centennial Olympic Park, resulting in the death of a 44-year-old American housewife who was standing some 40 yards from the explosion and a 40-year-old Turkish cameraman who suffered a fatal heart attack as he rushed to the scene to record it.

There has been widespread alarm since then. Security forces have been on high alert during subsequent Olympic Games, including the one to be hosted by Athens amid fears that the Games, the first summer Olympics since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, could be targeted by terrorists.

Greece is reportedly spending a record $1.2 billion for security alone in stark contrast to the good old days when only a paltry amount was earmarked for the athletes' safety. Gone were the happy and innocent days when athletes, coaches, journalists and Olympic fans could mingle without having to worry about security, without passing through metal detectors, without body searches and checking of bags and other personal belongings.

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PBA REFS AT IT AGAIN. The referees who officiated at last Saturday's game between Red Bull Barako and Coca-Cola did more harm than good to the image of the Philippine Basketball Association. They did a very lousy job, showing their bias against the players of Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao who still won, 99-90.

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Football fun at ALI-EUFFA championship

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Franco, Dychinco youth duckpin champs

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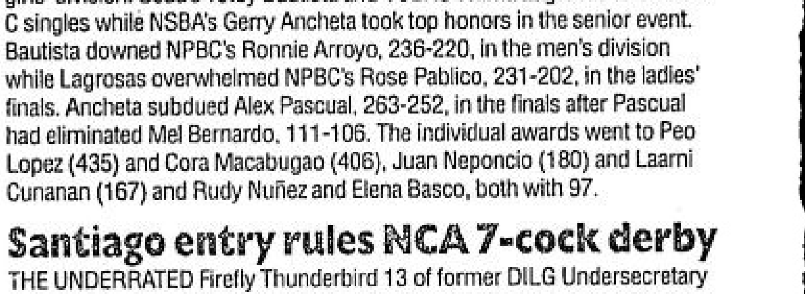
GINEBRA
SAMBOY LIM
Coach ALEZA
ROLAN

SAN MIGUEL All-Stars Allan Caidic, Hector Calma and Samboy Lim and team manager Manny Liwag (fourth from left) with Rolan Valeriano (to Liwag's left) and club president Boyet Balacania, organizers of the exhibition game that pitted SMC All-Stars and the Barrio Obrero Youth Athletic Association (Boyaa) and Friends recently. Liwag holds a plaque of appreciation from Boyaa.



ARK (Wave) International president Masao Ohyama hands over the check for P100,000 to Alex Lim for the company's sponsorship of the 33rd PBC International Bowling Championships slated May 28-June 11 at the Green Valley lanes in Pasig City. Also in photo are (from left) PBC secretary general Danny Santos, treasurer Nilo Penado, tournament director Roland Salariosa, PBC and World FIQ chief Steve Hontiveros, Liza Danga and Takahiro Yoshida of the DFJ.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Spring, Cebu-GMC fives forge title clash

ILOILO CITY -Spring Cooking Oil-Laguna bounced back with fury Saturday to rip the Baguio Cardinals, 118-105, and barge into the finals of the Papasinic-Iloilo-NBC pre-season basketball series at the University of San Agustin gym here.

Nani Epondlan exploded for 35 points, including three triples after the final 3:21, to enable the Spring-Laguna team of shooting champ Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino to earn a title shot at Cebu-GMC, which subdued host Iloilo, 87-81, in the other game.

Spring-Laguna and reigning Cebu Basketball Federation President's Cup champion GMC were scheduled to dispute the title last night.

Sponsored by Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines, the tourney hosted by the Iloilo Basketball Federation serves as the final preview for the NBC national championship set to start late this month.

Scores:

FIRST GAME

SPRING 118—Epondulan 35, Sanz 19, Manuel 18, Soriano 10, Kalaw 9, Corbin 8, Caceres 8, Lingal 3, Garcia 2, Mendoza 2

BAGUIO 105—Ton 22, Fontanilla 18, Mondina 15, Bona 13, Balares 13, Mapanao 8, Mendoza 7, Anchela 5, Collado 4.

SECOND GAME

CEBU 87– [illegible]ado 13, Lanete 13, Arellano 11, Saladaga 10, Concha 10, Ureal 6, Lozano 6, Cainglet 5, Mangubat 4, Mamba 3, Gabas 2

ILOILO 81– Sayon 21, Allado 16, Marucot 11, Olaguer 11, Poral 11, Sinco 7, Guanco 2, Pido 2

Tiger trips on 75, falls back by 5

WOODS points to the hole after sinking his par putt on the ninth.

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—World No. 1 Tiger Woods tumbled down the Wachovia Championship leaderboard after a three-over-par 75 dropped him five shots behind third-round pacesetter Arron Oberholser on Saturday.

Oberholser, 29, in his second year on the PGA Tour, moved into the lead with a four-under 68 and an 11-under total of 205.

Woods, who had been [illegible] strokes clear of the field follo[illegible] his 66 on Friday [illegible] 11t[illegible] place on 210.

Australian Geoff Ogilvy [illegible] of the best rounds of the [illegible] a 66 to vault into a tie [illegible] with Notah Begay III (69 [illegible] behind Oberholser.

Jeff Maggert (67) was four[illegible] 207. Paraguay's Carlos Franco, Joe Sindelar, Australia's Stuart Appleby and first-round leader Kirk Triplett shared fifth on 208, eight under [illegible]

The Wachovia, which offer[illegible] prize of $1,008,000 to th[illegible] has attracted one of the [illegible] fields of the season, with fiv[illegible] world's top six players appe[illegible] None of the five, howe[illegible]

[illegible] leaders after 54 holes.

Woods' problems at Quail Hollow Golf [illegible] began when he bo[illegible] opening hole. He followed [illegible] more bogeys and a [illegible] at 38. He al[illegible] 12th before rallying [illegible] 14th and 15th.

[illegible] he dropped [illegible] 16 [illegible] Woods hung his [illegible] the [illegible] to the left [illegible]ding [illegible]

[illegible] 66 on Fr[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] 54-ho[illegible]

[illegible] H[illegible] pc[illegible] Fiji's [illegible] round of [illegible] AT&T [illegible] ch National Pr[illegible] 6 and fi[illegible]

Reuters

Nat'l age group, juniors regular Fide events

TWO DATES: NCFP president Mat Defensor (left) and Primanila Realty & Development Corp. chair and CEO Eduardo S. Madrid (fifth from left) sign the agreement for the staging of the 2004 National Age-Group and National Junior Championships on May 17-21. Also in photo are Gm Torre, Primanila PRO Willy Quitiongco and NCFP secretary general Estimo.

THE NATIONAL Age Group Championships set May 21-25 and the National Junior Championship scheduled June 1-[illegible] [illegible]ficially registered with Fide [illegible]cordance with the regulation[illegible] the world chess body.

The age-group schedule does not match that of the duration of the tournament as earlier announced by a group in the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) led by secretary general Sammy Estimo and Grandmaster Eugene Torre.

Several parents and guardians [illegible] the junior chess players on Saturday called for a boycott of the age group championships set on May 17-21.

The Fide confirmation of the [illegible] events as part of the official Philippine chess calendar was contained in a letter dated May [illegible] 2004 signed by Victoria Barinova of t[illegible] Fide office and carried by [illegible] "Toti" Abundo, Fide del[illegible]gat[illegible]

[illegible] Mos[illegible] [illegible]th [illegible] Abu[illegible] the NCFP [illegible] the Fide [illegible] Trad[illegible] Shaw Bo[illegible] be [illegible] 10 [illegible]

Participants are required to present their birth certificate.

Those born in 1994 are eligible for the under 10, 1992 for the under 12, 1990 for under 14, 1988 for under 16, and 1986 for under 18.

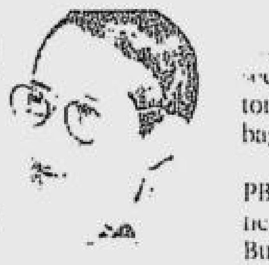
The winner of each category qualified to compete in the World Youth championship in Greece later this year.

Elo Mariano III is the defending champion for Under 14. Jodilyn [illegible]tona, the girls' defending champion for under 10, Sherilyn Cua [illegible] champion for under 16 and RJ Magallanes are among the [illegible] [illegible]strants.

Entries from Cebu, Davao, Bo[illegible] C[illegible]an de Oro, Angeles, Bu[illegible] [illegible], Olongapo and other parts of the country are expected.

[illegible]istration and inqu[illegible] [illegible] contact you: NCFP secretariat at Room 517, Midland Plaza, M. [illegible] Ermita Manila during o[illegible] at (02) 8844, telefax (02) [illegible] through Butch Llamas.

Bomb blasts imperil Athens Olympics



CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

TO a certain degree, I [illegible]re with Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit who said he was not worried by the recent bombings in Athens, venue of the Olympic Games on Aug. 13-29, adding that the host city can handle the security concerns in coordination with Europe, United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization authorities.

Bowling head and chief of mission Steve Hontiveros added Olympic organizers have assured the participating countries that the three bomb blasts, including the explosion in the Kalithea district, near hotels to be used by Olympic officials, were isolated cases and do not affect the Olympic preparations."

Still, the bombings left some athletes on edge, saying they are scared stiff because the specter of violence is now very much in th[illegible] whether or not these are isolated cases.

Security has [illegible] major concern of every Olymp[illegible] committee since the horrors of Mu[illegible] and Atlanta in 1996. And now Ath[illegible]

[illegible] said one Athe[illegible]bound athlete who reque[illegible] anonymity. But for others it was business as usual. "We are here to train and play in the Olympic even if the host city will be a virtual fortre[illegible]"

In Sydney which hosted a trouble-free Olympics in 2000, Australian sports officials said they still planned to send a team to Athens but would "never stand in the way of any athlete making a personal choice to stay away."

It was also reported that US Olympic officials have even obtained insurance just in case the Athens Games are canceled.

Since 1972 when Arab terrorists killed 11 Israel athletes and coaches at the Munich Games, Olympic organizers have been obsessed with security. In the Centennial Games in Atlanta in 1996, a pipe bomb containing nails and screws placed inside a green knapsack exploded in Centennial Olympic Park, resulting in the death of a 44-year-old American housewife who was standing some 40 yards from the explosion and a 40-year-old Turkish cameraman who suffered a fatal heart attack as he rushed to the scene to record it.

There has been widespread alarm since then. Security forces have been on high alert during subsequent Olympic Games, including the one to be hosted by Athens amid fears that the Games, the first summer Olympics since the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, could be targeted by terrorist.

Greece is reportedly spending a record $1.2 billion for security alone in stark contrast to the good old days when only a paltry amount was earmarked for the athletes' safety. Gone were the happy and innocent days when ath[illegible] [illegible] journalists and Olympic fans' [illegible]ing without having to worry about security, without passing through metal detectors, without body searches and checking of bags and other personal belongings.

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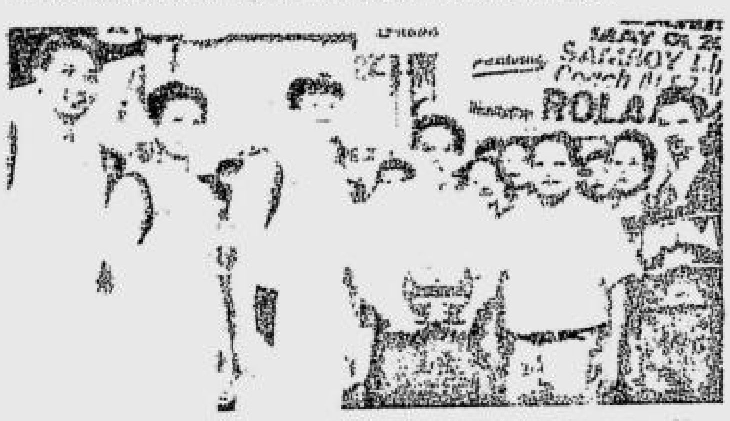

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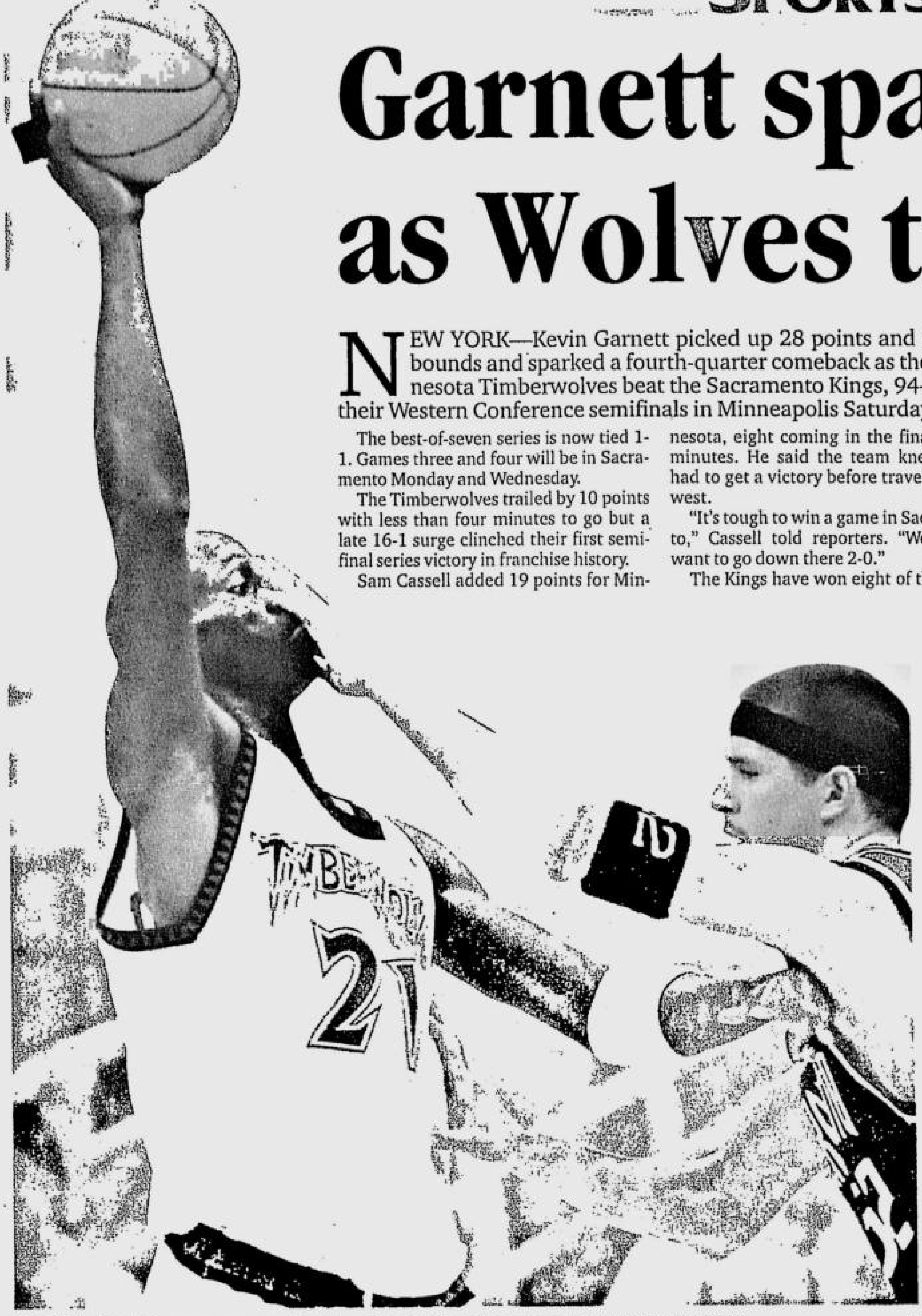


GARNETT looks for an open man as the Kings' Brad Miller puts on the pressure Saturday night. AP

Garnett sparks late rally as Wolves tie series, 1-1

NEW YORK—Kevin Garnett picked up 28 points and 11 rebounds and sparked a fourth-quarter comeback as the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Sacramento Kings, 94-89, in their Western Conference semifinals in Minneapolis Saturday.

The best-of-seven series is now tied 1-1. Games three and four will be in Sacramento Monday and Wednesday.

The Timberwolves trailed by 10 points with less than four minutes to go but a late 16-1 surge clinched their first semifinal series victory in franchise history.

Sam Cassell added 19 points for Minnesota, eight coming in the final three minutes. He said the team knew they had to get a victory before traveling out west.

"It's tough to win a game in Sacramento," Cassell told reporters. "We didn't want to go down there 2-0."

The Kings have won eight of their last nine home playoff games but the Timberwolves notched two decisive victories in Sacramento during the regular season.

Sacramento opened the series with a 104-98 triumph.

Latrell Sprewell scored 15 points for the Timberwolves while Fred Hoiberg added 13 points, including two freethrows in the final seconds that sealed Minnesota's win.

Trenton Hassell chipped in with 12 points for Minnesota and Ervin Johnson pulled down 11 rebounds.

Peja Stojakovic grabbed 26 points and seven rebounds for the Kings while Chris Webber had 21 points and seven rebounds.

Sacramento missed five freethrows in the final quarter in front of a sell-out crowd at the Target Center.

Doug Christie contributed 15 points for Sacramento and Brad Miller added 11 points and 11 rebounds, including three crucial ones in the final three minutes. *Reuters*

Pacers cool off Heat again, set new mark

INDIANAPOLIS—Reggie Miller scored 19 points and hit three of Indiana's seven 3-pointers to lead the Pacers to a 91-80 victory over the Miami Heat and a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals Saturday night.

Indiana set an NBA record with its sixth straight playoff win by double digits. The previous record was five, held by the 1985 Los Angeles Lakers and 1947 Philadelphia Warriors.

The series moves to Miami, where the Heat have won 16 straight, for Game 3 on Monday.

Lamar Odom led Miami with 19 points and 12 rebounds before fouling out. Dwyane Wade added 19 points, five assists and six turnovers for Miami.

Pacers All-star Jermaine O'Neal, coming off a 13-point outing in Game 1, was not at his best again with 17 points on 5-for-15 shooting.

Ron Artest had 20 points for the Pacers, who have won 11 straight overall and 11 in a row over the Heat.

In Minneapolis, Sam Cassell was clutch once again, and the Minnesota Timberwolves salvaged a split at home to start their Western Conference semifinal series.

MILLER: Time to shine for Indiana star. AP

Cassell scored eight points in the final three minutes, Kevin Garnett had 28 points and 11 rebounds and the Timberwolves closed the game with a 16-1 run to beat Sacramento.

Game 3 is Monday at raucous Arco Arena. *AP*

Jackson warns embattled Lakers ahead of Game 3

LOS ANGELES—Facing a potential knockout punch, the fractious Lakers received a warning from coach Phil Jackson concerning their uncertain future.

And an animated Gary Payton unleashed an emotional torrent Saturday, expressing frustration with his teammates, coachés and the media.

"Rumsfeld thinks he has it tough, I have to do this every day," Jackson said with a smile a day before the Lakers face the San Antonio Spurs in Game 3 of their Western Conference semifinal series.

The Spurs won a pair of 10-point decisions in San Antonio for a 2-0 lead. The Lakers realize no NBA team has ever won a best-of-seven series after losing the first three.

"You don't win the game tomorrow and you're down 3-0," Jackson said. "It's pretty much a death knell for a ballclub."

With that in mind, Jackson was asked if he was feeling the pressure.

"No, I'm not, and that's kind of surprising," he replied. "I feel very even about it. We know what we've done with this basketball club. Now, they've got to push it to the limit. I'm at peace with that.

"We have a team with a nebulous future. I went down the line with every one of them. It's a team that has to play for the now. It has to play for tomorrow's game."

Eight of the 14 players on the roster including Payton, Kobe Bryant, Karl Malone and Derek Fisher aren't locked in with the team past this season.

Neither is Jackson, who is finishing a five-year, $30-million contract. The Lakers announced in February they were halting negotiations for an extension until after the season, and the 58-year-old coach has left the door open to returning or retirement.

Payton and Malone joined the Lakers this season in search of their first championship rings in Hall of Fame-caliber careers.

It hasn't been a match made in heaven. Malone tore a knee ligament in December for the first serious injury of his 19-year career, and while playing every game, Payton has had his problems, most recently in matching up with Tony Parker in this series.

Parker has 50 points, 14 assists and two turnovers while Payton has 11 points, five assists and four turnovers.

"Basketball's up and down," Payton told reporters. "It's a wishy-washy thing with y'all, anyway." *AP*

Blue Jays take wing on Phelps' heroics

TORONTO—Phelps cracked a two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth inning, after having a homer overturned four pitches earlier, to lead the Toronto Blue Jays to a 4-2 win over the Chicago White Sox in the American League Saturday.

With the score 2-2 at the SkyDome, Phelps belted the first pitch he received from reliever Neal Cotts down the right field line and into the stands.

JOSE Valentin of the White Sox dives at a double by Phelps in the third inning. REUTERS

First base umpire Larry Vanover ruled it a home run but Chicago manager Ozzie Guillen argued the call and, after a conference between the umpires, the homer was reversed and called a foul ball.

Television replays clearly showed Phelps' drive was a foul ball.

Four pitches later, Phelps drilled a home run over the left field wall to break the tie and give the Blue Jays their season-best fourth straight victory.

Jason Frasor (1-1) tossed a scoreless eighth inning for his first major league win and Terry Adams pitched the ninth for his opening save of the season.

Cotts (0-1) was the loser, allowing two runs on one hit in one inning.

Chicago's Scott Schoeneweis and Toronto's Miguel Batista both pitched seven strong innings before the bullpens took over.

Phelps drove in three runs in the game and had two hits.

Vernon Wells drove in the other Toronto run and also had two hits and scored twice. *Reuters*

Big Griffey homers cut down SF Giants

NEW YORK—Ken Griffey Jr. kept up his resurgence at the plate, hitting two home runs to steer the host Cincinnati Reds to a 5-3 victory over the San Francisco Giants in the National League (NL) Saturday.

Griffey Jr. drilled two solo homers, giving him six for the season and three in two days. He now has 487 in his career.

Barry Larkin added a tie-breaking, two-run blast for the Reds in the fifth inning, his first home run since Aug. 1, 2003.

Barry Bonds continued his struggles at the plate since he missed three games with a virus infection.

The Giants slugger is 0-for-8 with five walks since his return, including 0-for-3 with a walk Saturday. Bonds leads the major leagues in walks with 49 already this season.

Paul Wilson (4-0) pitched seven solid innings for the win.

He allowed two runs on seven hits with three strikeouts and two walks.

Todd Jones tossed a perfect eighth before Danny Graves worked the ninth for his 13th save of the season. *Reuters*

No stopping Montoya

Fiery Williams driver eyes aggressive race

BARCELONA, Spain—Williams technical director Patrick Head believed there was no way to stop Juan Pablo Montoya taking on Michael Schumacher in aggressive fashion in the Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday.

Williams' fiery Colombian driver Montoya hit out at Schumacher after nearly being forced into a wall during the thrilling opening stages of the last race of the championship in San Marino.

But the pair will once again go head-to-head at the start of Sunday's race at the Circuit de Catalunya after Schumacher claimed pole from Montoya—and Head insists it is pointless to try to stop Montoya going all-out in pursuit of his rival.

"It will make for an interesting start," said Head, who admitted being surprised that Schumacher was not sanctioned for the incident in San Marino.

"I hope it's clean and both cars are still in the race after the first lap. But I think anybody that tries to talk to Juan and tell him to be cautious is talking to a stone wall.

"He knows he must finish to get a result, but he wants to win so he won't be giving any quarter to Michael. The first few laps certainly could be very exciting."

Montoya was punished for a clash with Schumacher's teammate, Rubens Barrichello, in last year's United States Grand Prix and was furious that stewards failed to question Schumacher's similar actions in Imola.

And, after qualifying 0.61 seconds behind Schumacher, Montoya repeated his complaint that Formula One's authorities have been unfairly lenient on Schumacher.

"You can go pretty much anywhere you want in history and he (Schumacher) gets away with it," said Montoya.

"From a public point of view, he is a good guy —he is perfect, he did a perfect lap today, a perfect race last race, perfect, perfect, you know.

"So they think 'he wouldn't do that, ooh no!' It is like if you are a favorite kid with the teacher you can do what you want." Williams team chief Frank Williams insisted he was looking forward to the start, even with the prospect of Montoya taking extra risks to get one over on Schumacher.

"I am looking forward to it," said Williams. "The last incident was just two brilliant headstrong drivers fighting, one won, one lost. It is great for television and great to write about." *AFP*

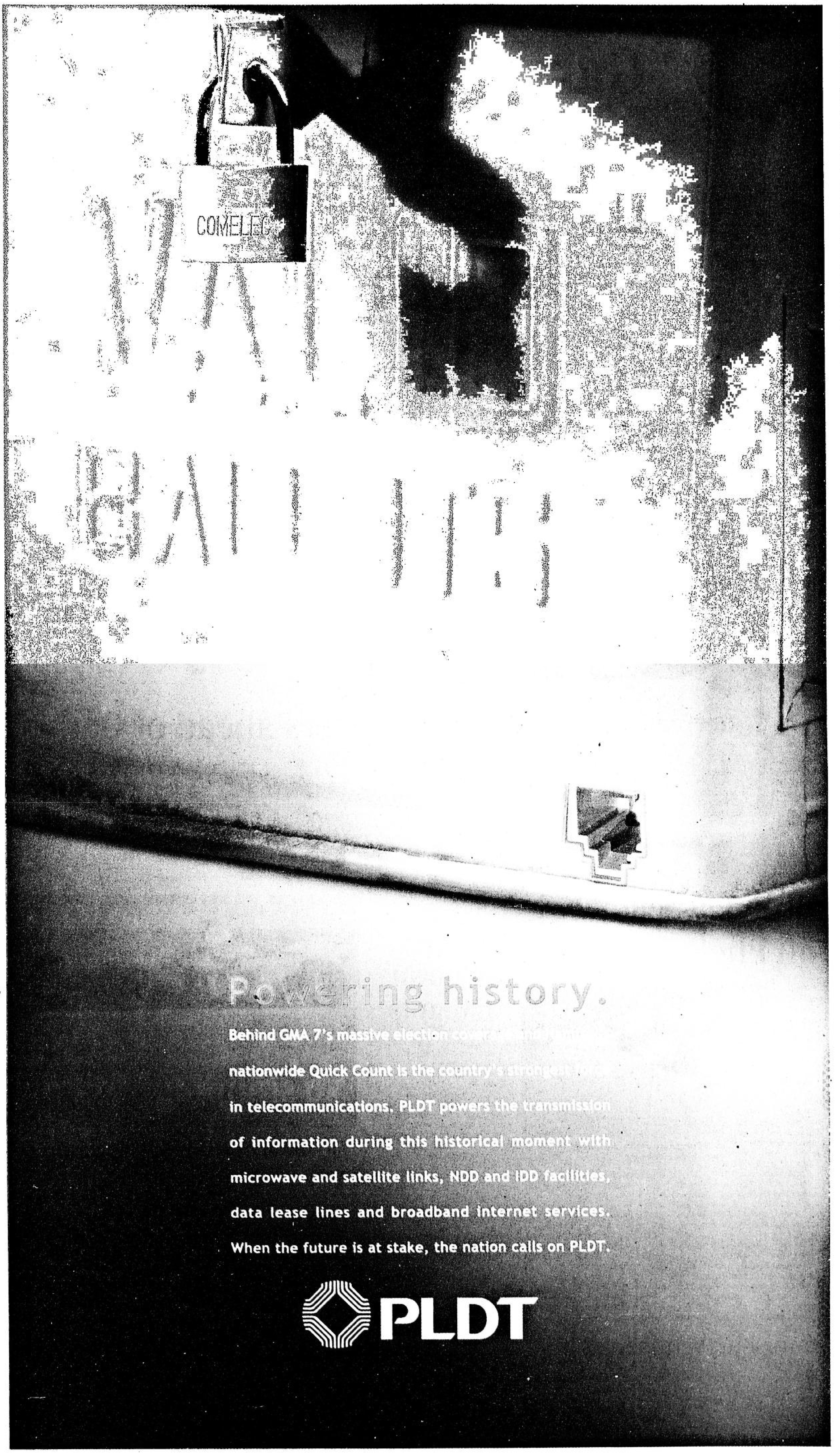
Injury-hit Venus in doubt for Berlin final

BERLIN—Former world number one Venus Williams overcame Croatian Karolina Sprem, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, in a surprisingly tight German Open semifinal on Saturday but hurt her ankle.

Third seed Williams, who twisted her left foot in the final game, said she hoped to be able to play Sunday's final against Amelie Mauresmo.

The powerful Frenchwoman, seeded second in the tournament, produced a near-perfect display to crush Jennifer Capriati, 6-2, 6-0, in the other semifinal.

"I will try to prepare for the match but I don't want to do anything stupid," Williams said on whether she would be able to chase a third straight WTA Tour title after victories in Charleston and Warsaw. Recapturing her best form after a string of injuries, she extended her winning streak to 15 matches. *Reuters*



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3 new areas seek ecozone status

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has endorsed for Malacañang's approval the granting of special economic zone status to three new areas—the Food Terminal Inc. complex in Taguig, Rapu-Rapu Island off Albay, and Fort Ilocandia in Ilocos Norte.

Special ecozones are selected areas with highly developed or which have the potential to be developed into agro-industrial, industrial, tourist/recreational, commercial, banking, investment, and financial centers.

Businesses operating in ecozones are entitled to fiscal incentives and enjoy tax benefits and holidays not enjoyed by other enterprises outside those areas.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the three areas were recommended for special ecozone status to encourage more export-based businesses and spur the economic activities in their locations.

Currently, the FTI complex is geared to maintain and operate a general market for producers, manufacturers and traders while its secondary purpose is to engage in real estate development.

Purisima said a 24-hectare portion of the FTI complex in Taguig would be converted into the FTI-SEZ as requested by present locators who are in the semiconductor and electronics business.

Among such firms are PSI Technologies Inc., Vishay (Philippines) Inc., Temic Automotive (Philippines) Inc., Team Pacific Corp. and PSPIC Corp. Other locators include warehouse operator Skyfreight Corp. and garment firms Triumph Philippines Inc. and Penn Philippines.

The proposed Rapu-rapu ecozone on the island off the Pacific coast of Albay province will cover 41.4 hectares that are mainly devoted to ore processing and an ore processing plant will be built.

Mining firm Lafayette (Philippines) Inc., which applied for the special ecozone status, expects its project to yield $350 million in the first six years of operation. Land development cost is estimated at $23 million.

Rapu-Rapu Minerals Inc., 40 percent of which is owned by Lafayette, will be the developer and operator of the proposed ecozone.

The mining project will start operation in the fourth quarter of this year and start exporting by next year.

Fort Ilocandia in Laoag City will be turned into a tourism ecozone to be developed by Fort Ilocandia Property Holdings and Development Corp. at a cost of P100 million.

INDICATORS

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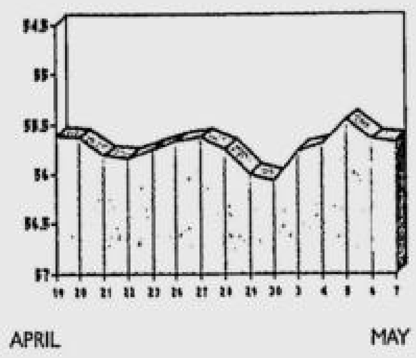


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.68 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 7, 2004

¥ 110.60 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 7, 2004

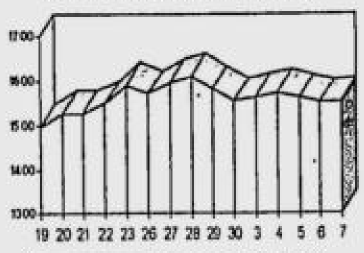
GOLD: $385.90-386.40

per ounce Hong Kong, May 7, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Conduct of polls to decide mart's direction

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

DEPENDING on the conduct and outcome of the national elections, stocks may likely start its modest climb this week, analysts said.

"A Macapagal victory should result in another market rally, albeit a subdued one. The market has assigned a great deal of significance to the results of the elections. We believe that it is too risky to put too much weight on the elections alone as there are other issues like the fiscal (budget) deficit and (movement of) US interest rates," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

Last week, the 33-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index was hardly changed at 1,554.69.

"Barring some unforeseen development, the market may turn positive (this) week once exit polls confirm what the surveys have been showing. It's hard to see the market moving dramatically as it may have already gotten a little ahead of itself. Moreover, we don't see the elections having a lasting positive impact on stock prices as we will merely be going back to where we were before the elections," Vistan added.

Grace Cerdenia of online broker 2TradeAsia.com said the market may continue its timid ascent from last Friday should the national polls prove peaceful.

CONDUCT/ B4

BSP raising inflation forecast for '04

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas will revise higher its inflation forecast for this year to update the impact of several factors affecting consumer prices.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said average inflation this year would likely turn out to be higher than the institution's 4.1-4.2 percent forecast.

However, he said the full-year average would still be likely within the government's official ceiling of 5 percent. The BSP has said that for as long as inflation remained within this targeted ceiling, it could afford to keep interest rates steady despite the expected tightening by the US Federal Reserve.

"We will revise our projection to take into account recent developments," Tetangco said.

For the past two months, the country's annual inflation rate stood higher than the BSP's own expectation.

In April, the inflation rate based on the 1994 index of the National Statistics Office stood at 4.1 percent compared to the BSP's projected 3.9 percent.

The inflation rate of 3.8 percent in March likewise rose past the BSP's estimate of 3.4-3.6 percent for the period.

But while the BSP would raise its inflation rate projection for the year, Tetangco said the increase would not likely be too far from the 4.1-4.2 percent original forecast.

Tetangco said the recent appreciation of the peso after falling to record lows in March would help ease pressures on consumer prices over the next few months.

Based on the BSP's latest assessment, cost-side factors—notably transport fares, utility charges and fuel costs—remained the principal source of risk to future inflation.

But since inflationary pressures resulting from these factors are largely outside the influence of monetary policy, the BSP believed they would not require any action from monetary authorities.

In addition, the BSP said it did not believe there would be significant demand-driven pressures in the near term as indicated by double-digit unemployment, spare capacity in manufacturing and sluggish bank lending over the last several quarters.

"Nevertheless, monetary authorities continue to face inflation risks from sentiment-driven volatile movements in the nominal exchange rate, as a result of political uncertainty and investors' concern about the attainability of fiscal consolidation over the medium term," BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said.

After a 4-5 percent range this year, the country's inflation rate is targeted to rise to 4.7-4.8 percent next year as consumer prices absorb the full impact of cost-side factors such as the volatile movement in crude oil prices, transport fare adjustments, possible increases in utility charges, mounting calls for wage adjustments as well as possible currency depreciation.

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SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES

SEC, DTI OK database link

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have agreed to link their respective databases in a bid to trim down by a step the procedure undertaken by corporations in starting up businesses.

Through the database link, corporations need not got to the DTI to register their names to preclude their use by single proprietors.

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Mandaluyong City, April 29, 2004.

ATTY. MA. ROMELA M. BENGZON
Corporate Secretary

Plan to place pension funds under IC worries GSIS

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System has expressed concern over a plan to place it under the supervision of another government entity, saying such a move might adversely affect its investment activities.

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia said that while he acknowledged the need for the pension fund's investment activities to be subject to the supervision of another agency, the investment guidelines to be imposed should not be "too restrictive" to hamper the flexibility of the pension fund in making decisions.

"The objective is to allow a pension fund practice flexibility in managing its own funds. If it (guidelines) becomes too restrictive, then you lose your flexibility," Garcia told reporters in a briefing.

Malacañang is expected to issue shortly an executive order that will place the GSIS and the Social Security System under the supervision of the Insurance Commission (IC). The IC will be responsible in monitoring the financial condition of the pension funds through the evaluation of their investment activities.

The move to place the GSIS and the SSS under the IC is aimed at instilling transparency in the investment decisions of the pension funds to protect their members' interest.

Garcia said the GSIS supported the move, but added that it should not be made to the detriment of the pension fund's investment flexibility.

He suggested that the supervision of the GSIS' investment activities should be done not solely by the IC alone, but in consultation with professional fund managers. Hiring financial experts will ensure that only appropriate investment guidelines are imposed on the GSIS, he added.

"I am recommending that principle because one cannot match the resources, experience and skills of a professional fund manager," he said. He said the government should observe the practices in other countries, which employ experts from multilateral agencies like the Wold Bank to provide investment consultancy services to pension funds.

Garcia has also expressed doubts on the legality of merely issuing an executive order to place the GSIS under the supervision of the IC.

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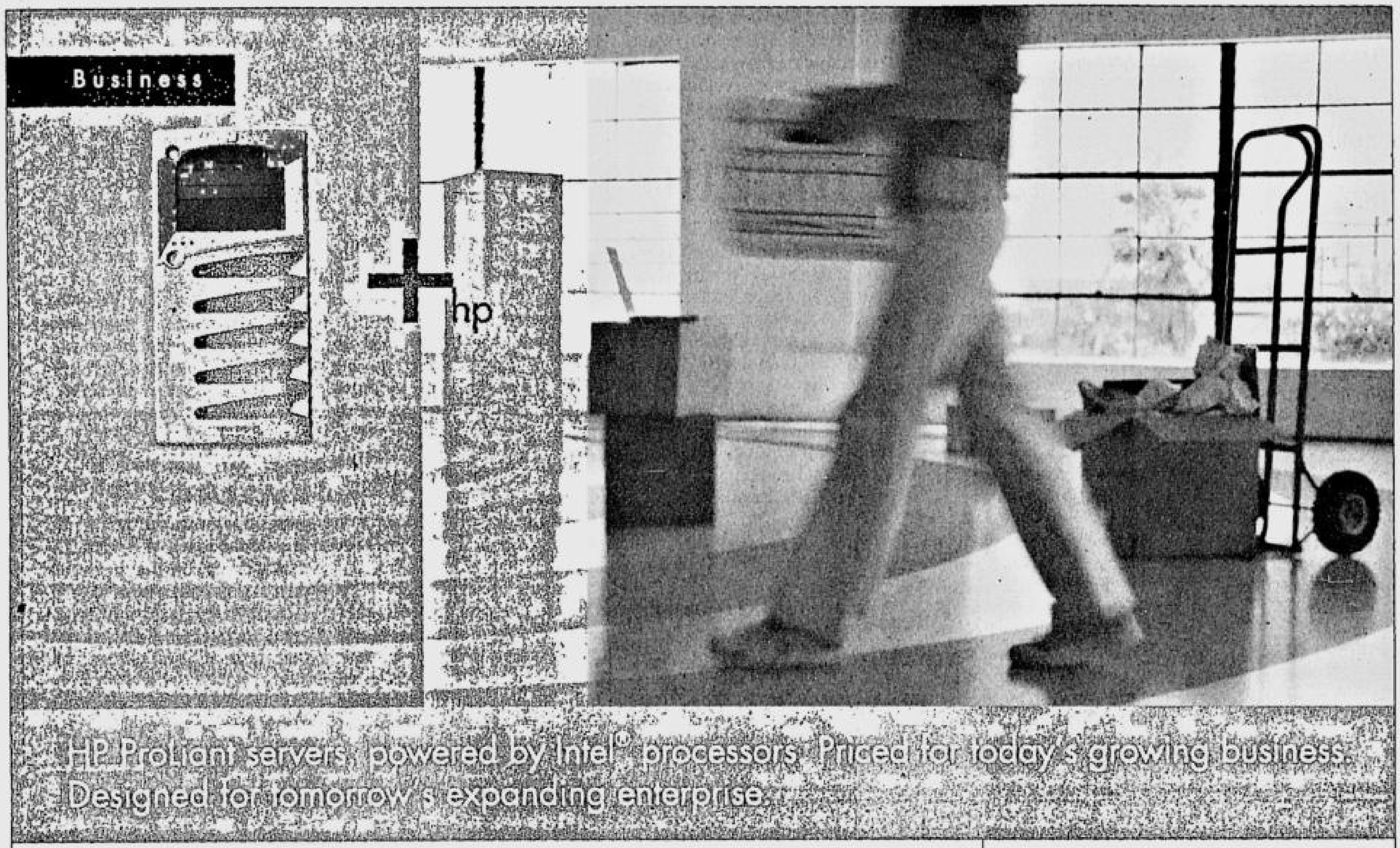
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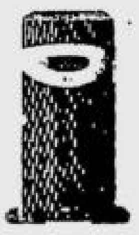

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Close encounter with a masa voter

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

TODAY, election day, is the day of the poor—the *masa*. Once every three years, the poor voter emerges from his *nipa* hut or cardboard hovel to flex his weary muscles. With unsteady hand, he casts his ballot in the neighborhood precinct. His vote is as good as that of the richest man in the land. One man, one vote. This is the miracle and splendor of democracy.

This one-man-one-vote principle occasionally comes under attack. Some of us who live in more comfortable surroundings think that the right to vote should be reserved only to those who share in the cost of running the government, more specifically, those who pay income tax. The poor—who pay no income tax because they have little or no income to pay tax on—should have no say in the choice of our political leaders. Besides, they vote mindlessly on the basis of the candidate's popularity, not his credentials. A variation of this idea is to disqualify anybody who does not have a numbered address. The trouble with these ideas is that some very rich people, with the most upscale of addresses, pay no income tax either.

Another idea is to require a voter to have at least a grade school education. To pursue this line of thought to absurdity, a person with a doctorate in philosophy would be the wisest voter of all.

Which brings me to my friend Enzo, one of the most remarkable characters I have ever known in my long life. I met Enzo about a month before the 1992 presidential elections. It was the Lenten season and I was hosting the *pabasa*—the singing of Christ's Passion set in verse—at my farm up in the foothills of Mt. Isarog, about 14 kilometers from downtown Naga City. The church approved the verses of the Bicolano *pabasa* over a century ago. Nobody knows who composed the chant. The *pabasa* takes from sundown to sunup the following morning. My *pabasa* was quite popular and people from two *barangays* would come to attend.

Enzo sat beside me at dinner. This was the first time I saw him, and I have never seen him again. He must have been in his late 40s with graying hair. He was tall and roughly handsome. I could tell he had some Castilian blood in him.

Enzo was a *kaingero*, a slash and burn farmer, the poorest kind of farmer in the country. He lived alone. His farm, a third of a hectare of camote (sweet potatoes), which he tilled with his faithful carabao, was about a kilometer from my farm up the foothills of Mount Isarog. Beyond Enzo's *kaingin* was virgin forest. He was literally living at the edge of the world.

You could not find a fellow more *masa* than Enzo. I was sure he never paid any income tax, never took out a rural bank loan, never bought a life insurance policy. But then, he certainly never bothered the city mayor, or the barangay captain or even his next door neighbor, for anything either.

We chatted in Bicolano, of course. He told me that he would go to downtown Naga only to bring his harvest. Whenever he did, he would take in a movie and splurge on a plate of *pansit* at some Chinese restaurant.

Eventually, our conversation drifted into the presidential election the following month. "Yes," he said, "I am a registered voter, and I am going to vote next month." Which meant, he could read and write. Then I asked him, "But you live so far away from everybody. You don't even hear the church bells summon you to vespers. Why will you bother to vote?"

I was expecting him to say that he wanted to enjoy the holiday, or the barangay captain had asked him to, or that some politician's representative might buy his vote and he would make a little extra money.

Instead, he said, "Because, if I don't vote, I would be like the wild animals that roam around my *kaingin*."

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Which brings me to my friend Enzo, one of the most remarkable characters I have ever known in my long life. I met Enzo about a month before the 1992 presidential elections. It was the Lenten season and I was hosting the *pabasa*—the singing of Christ's Passion set in verse—at my farm up in the foothills of Mt. Isarog, about 14 kilometers from downtown Naga City. The church approved the verses of the Bicolano *pabasa* over a century ago. Nobody knows who composed the chant. The *pabasa* takes from sundown to sunup the following morning. My *pabasa* was quite popular and people from two *barangays* would come to attend.

Enzo sat beside me at dinner. This was the first time I saw him, and I have never seen him again. He must have been in his late 40s with graying hair. He was tall and roughly handsome. I could tell he had some Castilian blood in him.

Enzo was a *kaingero*, a slash and burn farmer, the poorest kind of farmer in the country. He lived alone. His farm, a third of a hectare of camote (sweet potatoes), which he tilled with his faithful carabao, was about a kilometer from my farm up the foothills of Mount Isarog. Beyond Enzo's *kaingin* was virgin forest. He was literally living at the edge of the world.

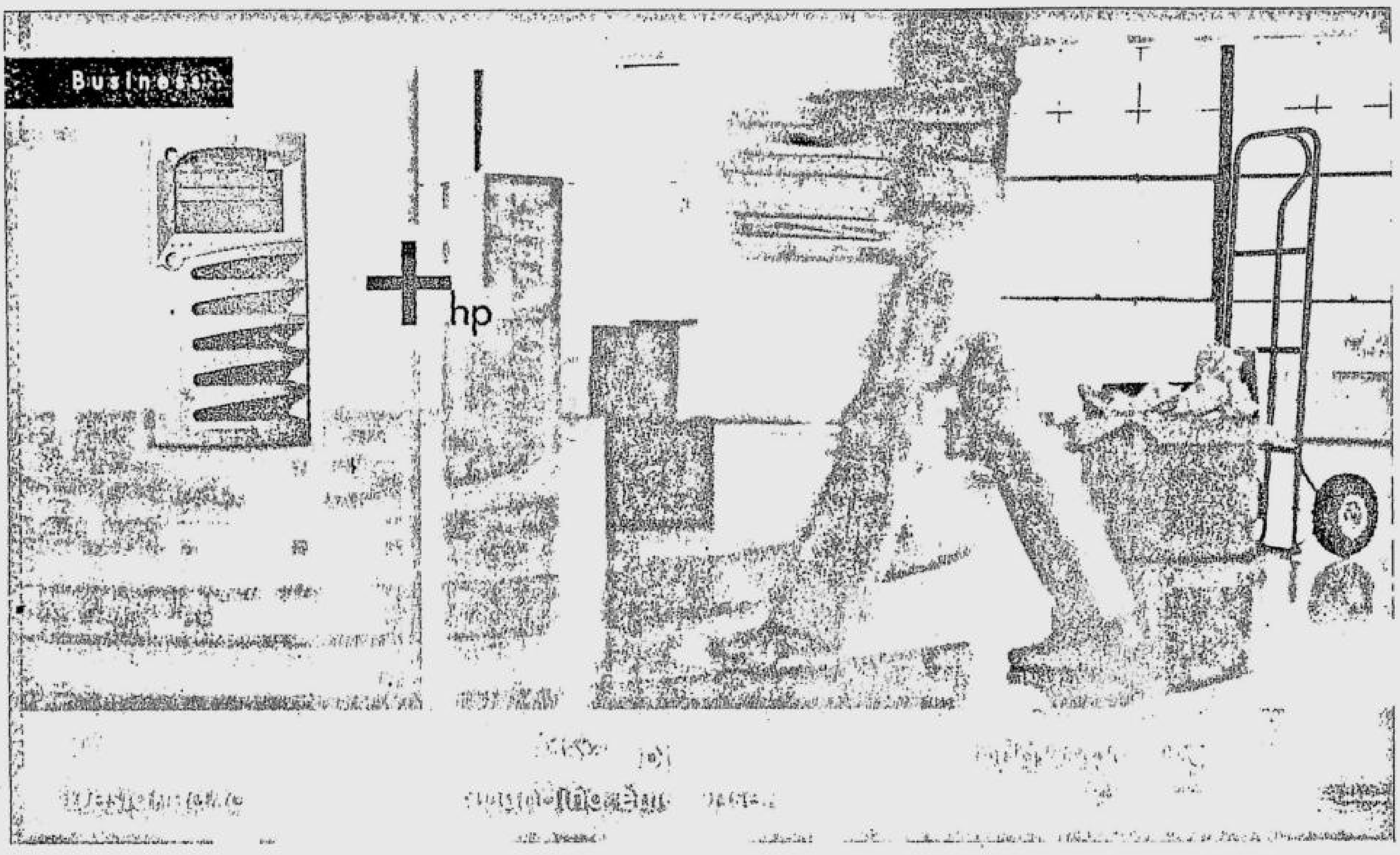
You could not find a fellow more *masa* than Enzo. I was sure he never paid any income tax, never took out a rural bank loan, never bought a life insurance policy. But then, he certainly never bothered the city mayor, or the barangay captain or even his next door neighbor, for anything either.

We chatted in Bicolano, of course. He told me that he would go to downtown Naga only to bring his harvest. Whenever he did, he would take in a movie and splurge on a plate of *pansit* at some Chinese restaurant.

Eventually, our conversation drifted into the presidential election the following month. "Yes," he said, "I am a registered voter, and I am going to vote next month." Which meant, he could read and write. Then I asked him, "But you live so far away from everybody. You don't even hear the church bells summon you to vespers. Why will you bother to vote?"

I was expecting him to say that he wanted to enjoy the holiday, or the barangay captain had asked him to, or that some politician's representative might buy his vote and he would make a little extra money.

Instead, he said, "Because, if I don't vote, I would be like the wild animals that roam around my *kaingin*."



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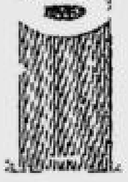

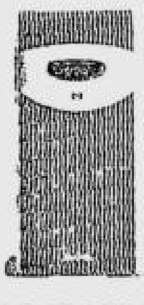

Piltel fumble

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE PRESENT board of Pilipino Telephone Corp. has been in power for several years now, but to their collective embarrassment, they only found out last month that majority of them do not even have a single qualifying share under each respective name.

How this basic corporate requirement escaped Piltel corporate secretary Ma. Lourdes Rausa-Chan, who has been in that position since the First Pacific Group acquisition in 1998, is one for the jumbled Piltel books that the board would rather not explain.

In any case, Piltel chair Napoleon Nazareno, president/CEO Gregorio Atienza, and fellow directors Carlos Pedrosa, Eduardo Gana, Ramoncito Fernandez, Enrique Filamor, Edward Go, Rolando Peña and AIM professor Meliton Salazar have already acquired the requisite nominal shares to legitimize their continued stay in the board.

Parity rule in Liberty

THE CHINOY partners of Liberty Flour Mills are close to taking majority control of the 46-year-old company from the Filipino pioneering families of Maramba, Kalaw, Locsin, Lopez and Jalandoni.

Parity Values, the trading and investment company controlled by brothers William and John Carlos Uy and William Ang, now owns 38.83 percent of the flour milling and distribution company.

In addition, William Carlos Uy, who replaced long-time chair Jesus Jalandoni last year, holds another 8.37 percent. Uy himself has been with the company for nearly 38 years now.

Liberty Flour, whose majority share of the 60s and 70s market with its "Maya" brand has been whittled down to only 10 percent, lost more than P32 million in 2003, after posting nearly P46 million in profit the year before.

But the company expects to reverse last year's loss with an expected P25 million in net income for this year.

Polo wins

THE SEÑORES and the señoras of the Manila Polo Club have finally risen from their collective siesta and last week voted, 1,133 "yes" against 43 "no," to shore up the club's tottering finances and amend the club constitution.

The few naysayers are identified, if you believe the camp of director Roberto R. Romulo, with the faction of ex-president Antonio Garcia and his business partner, lobbyist Jose Manuel Romualdez.

The amendments would, among others, best with the board and a council of ex-presidents to raise the dues without having to physically round up members or solicit proxies for a general meeting.

Heard through the grapevine

AFTER having unsuccessfully lobbied to have him nominated as the next chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Commissioner Jesus Enrique Martinez now finds himself in the receiving end of a disbarment suit.

Ironically, the disbarment suit was filed by a former friend of Martinez, Baguio-based Dutch businessman Cornelis Lubberts, after the latter won a collection suit against Martinez and his wife for P600,000.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Globe opposes NTC proposal to register dealers, repair shops

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. said it would oppose a plan of the National Telecommunications Commission to require the registration of all cellular phone dealers and repair shops.

A Globe official said the NTC plan was not practical and would entail additional costs to subscribers and stunt the growth of the telecom sector.

The NTC has started to conduct public hearings on its plan to require the registration of mobile phone dealers and repair shops to curb illegal practices like the sale of stolen phones as well as prevent fraud like text scams.

The agency had drafted two circulars that it planned to issue in the second half of this year. The new regulation would also address indirectly the registration of SIM cards, an NTC policy issued in year 2000 that mobile phone companies had successfully blocked through the courts.

Ferdinand Dela Cruz, head of Globe's wireless business group, likened the new plan to having a national ID system. But he asked whether the NTC could really enforce such a plan.

"Is it worth the additional burden to the subscriber who will eventually pay for it? Can we really enforce it properly," he asked.

The NTC draft circulars prescribed a penalty of P5,000 for each violation committed by the dealers or repair shops. Among these violations are the

GLOBE/B4

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BSP urged to exempt Piltel debt swap from regulatory limits

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART Communications Inc., through financial adviser JP Morgan Chase, plans to request the central bank's Monetary Board to exempt creditors of Pilipino Telephone Corp. from regulatory limits on foreign exchange holdings.

This was after Bank of the Philippine Islands and Land Bank of the Philippines sought the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' exemption before swapping their Piltel debt into a 10-year Smart debt or 12-year low-yield, sovereign-backed bonds.

"The two banks asked Smart to get BSP exemption on the overbought limit because if they decide to take one of the offers, they may exceed the forex limit and be penalized," said a banking source.

BPI and LandBank account for about 28 percent of Piltel's obligations. Without their participation, the Smart-Piltel debt swap may not push through.

Smart said it would only proceed with the debt transaction if at least 75 percent of Piltel's debt would be swapped with discounted cash, low-yield government-guaranteed bonds or Smart's medium-term loan. Piltel has about P20.5 billion in outstanding debt.

Banks, under the BSP rules, could not accumulate more than $5 million for their own account. Banking sources said the dollar-swap facilities offered by Smart would be covered by the overbought restriction.

A central bank official said he heard about a plan for JP Morgan to seek an exemption on behalf of Smart but said no formal request had been made.

Smart had extended to May 31 the deadline for Piltel's creditors to participate in the debt swap. Sources said that aside from BPI and LandBank, China Banking Corp. and Credit Agricole also continued to hold approval of the debt swap as of April 30. The four banks account for 33 percent of Piltel's debt.

Smart originally set the deadline on April 20 but moved it to April 30 after failing to solicit enough interest on time. As of April 30, Smart said it had received debt exchange approval for more than 50 percent of Piltel's debt but not 75 percent.

Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said the May 31 deadline was the final extension.

Another source said that Japanese supplier Marubeni Corp. had accepted Smart's offer to convert Piltel's outstanding obligations into a 10-year Smart debt maturing in 2014 with a fixed interest of 2.25 percent a year but with an option to be paid either in December 2007 or December 2008 at a 47.5 US cents and 42.5 US cents discount.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. also agreed to swap its exposure with a 10-year Smart debt.

Nazareno said Marubeni would account for about 35 percent of Piltel's total obligations.

"This (50 percent level) is, however, still below the thresholds (both in aggregate and in respect of certain individual facilities) set by Smart," said parent firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in a statement last April 30.

A successful debt conversion would allow Smart to acquire PLDT' 45-percent stake in Piltel. In acquiring the Piltel stake, profitable Smart could use the tax credits of its affiliate to reduce its tax payments and realize savings.

Piltel has about P13.5 billion in net operating loss carryover or Nolco benefits incurred in 2001 and 2002 that should lead to tax savings of P4.3 billion this year and next for Smart.

Globe opposes . . .

From page B3

sale or trading of stolen phones and parts, unblocking of cellular phones, and operating without an NTC permit.

The commission said it would suspend, cancel or revoke the permit of companies that would violate the circular.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said the two circulars would help the NTC prevent rising cellular phone-related fraud.

He said the NTC could have done a better regulatory job had telecom firms not asked the courts to prevent the Commission from enforcing a 2000 order requiring the registration of all SIM (subscriber identification module) cards.

"I hope that this time around, the (telecom firms) would cooperate and allow the NTC to do its job of regulating the industry," Solis said.

In the draft circular, the NTC would collect a filing fee of P180, a permit fee of P1,400 and an inspection fee of P720 for the cellular phone repair shops and P1,000 for cellular phone dealers. The NTC permit is valid for a year and must be renewed annually.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 7, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	3.05	3.15	3.05	3.15	28,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	42	42	41.5	41.5	601,000
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	1,290
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39.5	39	39	252,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.75	24.75	24	24.5	571,200
Philippine National Bank	23.5	24.25	23.25	24.25	15,300
Security Bank Corp.	16.25	17	16.25	17	3,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	24	24.75	24	24.75	42,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1	1.04	215,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1490	1490	1490	1490	1,700
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.75	23.75	23.25	23.25	15,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	500,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	820	830	810	830	95,090
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.2	103,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.62	1.68	1.62	1.66	5,950,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1050	1075	1045	1075	127,220
Ivantage Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	90,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	42,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	20	19.25	20	702,100
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	33	31.5	33	1,212,300
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.2	3.3	4,668,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	20,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.99	1	0.99	1	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	551,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	180,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	388,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	30	29.5	29.5	181,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	21	21.5	21	21.25	333,400
RFM Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	59.5	59	59.5	53,200
San Miguel Corp. B	74	74	73.5	73.5	267,000
Universal Robina Corp.	7	7	7	7	5,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	2,453,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.95	3.05	2.95	3.05	125,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	25,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9.9	9	9.9	7,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.57	0.59	0.56	0.59	9,670,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	40,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	20,000
F&J Prince Hldgs. B	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27.5	28.5	27.5	28.5	1,058,700
Ionics Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	16,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	50,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.43	0.5	0.43	0.5	80,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.1	1.14	2,226,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,550,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	50,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15.25	15.25	15.25	15.25	100
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	2,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	11,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	130,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	23.5	23.5	23	23.25	291,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	16,981,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	150,000.
Cyber Bay Corporation	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	3,670,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	6,708,000
Kuok Phil Properties	0.175	0.175	0.16	0.16	630,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	410,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.1	1.14	150,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.3	2,562,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	3,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	60,000
Pacifica	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	7,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,734,190	53,905,900.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	76,530,810	389,606,060.00
PRO	31,471,000	119,385,820.00
Mining	210,000	53,300.00
OIL	10,060,000	87,500.00
GRAND TOTALS :	120,006,000	563,038,580.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	451.70	DOWN 1.61
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,431.98	UP 6.64
PRO	548.08	UP 2.98
Mining	1,383.95	UP 8.68
OIL	1.20	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	953.21	UP 2.64
Composite	1,554.69	UP 3.00

NO. OF ADVANCES: 27, NO. OF DECLINES: 17, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 38, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 82, NO. OF TRADES: 1,959

CURRENCIES

May 9, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.827746	1.000000	55.5470
Japan	Yen	0.007543	0.009113	0.5062
United Kingdom	Pound	1.486797	1.796200	99.7735
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106135	0.128222	7.1223
Switzerland	Franc	0.644712	0.778877	43.2643
Canada	Dollar	0.600905	0.725953	40.3245
Singapore	Dollar	0.490167	0.592171	32.8933
Australia	Dollar	0.600208	0.725111	40.2777
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.195671	2.652590	147.3434
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220727	0.266660	14.8122
Brunei	Dollar	0.488720	0.590423	32.7962
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000115	0.0064
Thailand	Baht	0.020756	0.025075	1.3928
UAE	Dirham	0.225372	0.272272	15.1239
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.208100	67.1063
Argentina	Peso	0.286665	0.346320	19.2370
Brazil	Real	0.276561	0.334113	18.5590
Denmark	Kroner	0.134394	0.162361	9.0187
India	Rupee	0.018560	0.022422	1.2455
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217857	0.263193	14.6196
Mexico	New Peso	0.072393	0.087458	4.8580
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523625	0.632591	35.1385
Norway	Kroner	0.122818	0.148377	8.2419
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014408	0.017406	0.9669
South Africa	Rand	0.120254	0.145279	8.0698
Korea	Won	0.000710	0.000858	0.0477
Sweden	Kroner	0.109773	0.132617	7.3665
Syria	Pound	0.018715	0.022609	1.2559
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025030	0.030239	1.6797
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000432	0.000522	0.0290

Conduct of polls . . .

From page B1

"Despite these, participants are expected to weigh how optimistic investors are on the pace of corporate earnings growth this year. Valuation perspectives might also come into play, given the overall market's cheap price-to-earnings (ratios)," she said.

Vistan said earnings prospects were "very positive" but stocks were not really cheap now.

"Investors can still find undervalued stocks, but its getting harder everyday. This was evident when stock prices declined last week in the midst of a strong first-quarter earnings results. Investors should also keep a close eye on how US interest rates will move. US rates are going higher from here and that's going to be a dark cloud hanging over the equities market," he told investors.

Late buying on telephone and energy stocks last Friday managed to buoy the main-index up three points or 0.19 percent.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. shares rose P5 last Friday to P1,075 despite its shares on Wall Street slipping overnight. Other winners last Friday included Globe Telecom on the back of higher earnings, Manila Electric Co. "B" shares, First Philippine Holdings Corp., and SM Prime Holdings Inc.

Meanwhile, analysts also said a victory by President Macapagal-Arroyo may bring in fresh investment into the country. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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304 sqm.	P1,276,800.00	P127,680.00
325 sqm.	P1,579,000.00	P157,900.00
359 sqm.	P1,364,200.00	P136,420.00
376 sqm.	P1,579,000.00	P157,900.00
413 sqm.	P1,734,600.00	P173,460.00
459 sqm.	P1,744,200.00	P174,420.00

Foliage Hills
Antipolo, Rizal

Lot size	Price	DP
178 sqm.	P783,000.00	P78,300.00
187 sqm.	P822,800.00	P82,280.00
202 sqm.	P888,000.00	P88,800.00
216 sqm.	P864,000.00	P86,400.00
240 sqm.	P1,056,000.00	P105,600.00

Hills of Maia Alta
Antipolo, Rizal

Lot size	Price	DP
153 sqm	P627,300.00	P62,730.00
170 sqm.	P748,000.00	P74,800.00
204 sqm.	P897,600.00	P89,760.00
230 sqm.	P943,000.00	P94,300.00
253 sqm.	P1,037,300.00	P103,730.00
306 sqm.	P1,193,400.00	P119,340.00
326 sqm.	P1,238,800.00	P123,880.00
357 sqm.	P1,356,600.00	P135,660.00

Manila Southwood Residential Estate
Carmona, Cavite

Lot size	Price	DP
470 sqm.	P2,350,000.00	P235,000.00
486 sqm	P2,430,000.00	P243,000.00
534 sqm.	P2,670,000.00	P267,000.00
563 sqm	P2,815,000.00	P281,500.00
609 sqm	P3,045,000.00	P304,500.00

Palacio Real Subdivision
Calamba, Laguna

Lot size	Price	DP
96 sqm.	P249,600.00	P24,960.00
150 sqm.	P405,000.00	P40,500.00
180 sqm.	P486,000.00	P48,600.00
200 sqm.	P520,000.00	P52,000.00
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528 sqm.	P1,425,600.00	P142,560.00

AYUKIT
Bucaue, Bulacan

Lot size	Price	DP
50 sqm	P143,710.95	P14,371.10
100 sqm	P287,421.90	P28,742.19
131 sqm.	P376,522.68	P37,652.27
148 sqm.	P425,384.41	P42,538.44
179 sqm.	P514,485.19	P51,448.59
206 sqm.	P592,089.11	P59,208.91

RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM

Biltmore Tower
Legaspi Village, Makati

Lot size	Price	DP
72.4 sqm	P4,409,160.00	P440,916.00
81.5 sqm.	P4,979,650.00	P497,965.00
82.6 sqm	P5,046,860.00	P504,686.00
131.1 sqm.	P8,416,620.00	P841,662.00

Palm Tower
St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makali

Lot size	Price	DP
24.48 sqm.	P859,248.00	P85,924.80
36.36 sqm.	P1,210,788.00	P121,078.80
36.54 sqm.	P1,477,264.00	P147,726.40
43.20 sqm.	P1,516,320.00	P151,632.00
52.54 sqm.	P1,838,900.00	P183,890.00
65.00 sqm.	P2,509,000.00	P250,900.00
74.40 sqm.	P2,834,147.35	P284,314.74
87.67 sqm.	P3,068,450.00	P306,845.00
101.97 sqm.	P3,385,404.00	P338,540.40
107.04 sqm.	P3,553,728.00	P355,372.80

Ark Condominium
Sierra Madre St., Mandaluyong

Lot size	Price	DP
65.33 sqm.	P1,489,524.00	P148,952.40
125.46 sqm.	P2,998,494.00	P299,849.40

Chateau de Baie
Roxas Blvd.

Lot size	Price	DP
157 sqm.	P4,025,000.00	P402,500.00
184 sqm.	P4,625,000.00	P462,500.00

RESIDENTIAL TOWN HOUSE

Isabella Place
Hobart Subdivision, Fairview, Q.C.

Lot size	Price	DP
85 sqm.	P1,868,265.00	P186,826.50
87 sqm.	P2,002,482.00	P200,248.20
146 sqm.	P2,702,915.00	P270,291.50

Dionisio Royale Executive Homes
Greenville Subdivision,Q.C.

Lot size	Price	DP
54 sqm.	P1,600,000.00	P160,000.00

VJ Town House
Parañaque City

Lot size	Price	DP
226 sqm.	P2,600,000.00	P260,000.00

OFFICE CONDOMINIUM

Ark Condominium
Mandaluyong

Lot size	Price	DP
21.13 sqm.	P576,849.00	P57,684.90
37.17 sqm.	P1,014,741.00	P101,474.10

Palm Tower
St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makati

Lot size	Price	DP
16.16 sqm.	P496,112.00	P49,611.20
17.40 sqm.	P534,180.00	P53,418.00
18.96 sqm.	P606,720.00	P60,672.00
22.25 sqm.	P712,000.00	P71,200.00
32.56 sqm	P1,041,920.00	P104,192.00
48.26 sqm.	P1,409,192.00	P140,919.20
51.10 sqm.	P1,492,120.00	P149,212.00
66.00 sqm.	P1,927,200.00	P192,720.00
103 sqm.	P3,021,616.00	P302,161.60

Atlanta Center
Annapolis St., Greenhills

Lot size	Price	DP
76.57 sqm.	P3,040,578.00	P304,057.00
89.67 sqm	P3,504,318.00	P350,431.80
95.83 sqm.	P3,722,382.00	P372,238.20
112.44 sqm.	P4,613,964.00	P461,396.40
137.15 sqm.	P5,816,000.00	P581,600.00
158.79 sqm.	P6,894,020.00	P689,402.00
159.88 sqm.	P7,558,972.00	P755,897.20
171.21 sqm.	P8,480,820.10	P848,082.00

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Country Club at Tagaytay	-	340K
Eagleridge Golf Club "A"	250K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	290K	-
Fontana "D"	50K	please call
Makati Sports Club "A"	please call	180K
Manila Polo Club	-	2.3M
Manila Southwoods "A"	360K	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	540K
Punta Fuego	-	500K
Quezon City Sports Club	170K	please call
Rockwell Club	280K	
SPA & Lodge		550K
Sherwood Hills "A"	60K	-
Sta Elena Golf Club "B"		1.2M
Tagaytay Higlands Golf Club	-	750K
Tagaytay Midlands	680K	-
Valle Verde Country Club - Ind.		120K
Valley Golf Club	250K	-
Wack Wack Golf Club	7.2M	6M

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Farm-to-market roads

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

DURING a recent visit to a community of B'laans in South Cotabato, the residents voiced out to our group a simple request: they needed horses to transport their farm produce to town.

Living in an upland farming community whose only link to the main road were several kilometers of very bad dirt road (our van was almost wrecked during that visit), the residents probably saw the futility in asking for the road to be repaired or improved, which would require substantial funds. So they were seeking a much more inexpensive but just as effective solution to a perennial problem, that of lack of access to the markets.

The situation had put them at the mercy of opportunistic traders who would go to their farms with a pickup truck or utility vehicle, and offer them a price for their produce much lower than what they could otherwise obtain elsewhere. But with the very bad road and no way to bring the products to the market themselves, they had no choice.

Age-old problem

When I was a BS Agriculture major in UP Los Baños decades ago, this had been the same problem cited in our study of agricultural markets: the small farmers lacking direct access to the markets. The solution identified was always the same: more farm-to-market roads.

One would think that after decades of seeing this problem keep the incomes of small farmers low even as the agricultural traders and processors got richer and richer, we would have made substantial progress in addressing the problem.

Year in and year out, we hear of promises to build more farm-to-market roads from politicians and government policymakers, and official records would show thousands of kilometers of such roads having been built through all those years. And yet one gets the feeling that we've hardly made a dent on the problem. Small farmers in the Philippines remain poor, unable to bring their produce to the market to fetch the best price. These people who feed the rest of us have remained hungry, and among the poorest among us.

I cannot forget the time I attended a conference in Malaysia some 26 years ago, where the organizers included a field trip to observe farmers. Upon interviewing a particular farmer what his problems were, we were aghast to hear his reply: his car was over five years old and needed to be replaced. It made me wonder then how long it would take before the main problem of the small Filipino farmer would be how to replace his six-year-old car. It's been 26 years since that unforgettable field visit in Malaysia, and our upland farmers are still dreaming of having even just a horse!

Urban farms?

Last week I caught former Budget Secretary Jun Enriquez in a TV interview where he was lamenting how certain Metro Manila congressmen had gotten away with using their pork barrel funds to supposedly finance farm-to-market roads. If people have been able to get away with such blatant deception and obvious misuse of taxpayers' money, what more with officials in the provinces, whether from the national or local governments, who have been allocating funds to thousands of kilometers of farm-to-market roads all these years?

No wonder that even after decades of supposedly building these roads, the wide shortage for these facilities persists. Obviously, many of these roads for which funds were allocated were built only on paper. Other such project funds were diverted to the building of roads where it was not farmers who benefited. I recall a past mayor of my town who was accused of diverting funds meant for a farm-to-market road to the concrete paving of the road leading to—where else?—his house. Still in other cases, the funds were diverted to something else other than a road.

Transparency is key

Still, I have consistently recommended that all funds meant for farm-to-market roads, as well as for other rural infrastructure facilities, should be put under the control of local governments. It is the local governments who know best where the farm-to-market roads are needed, not the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or Department of Agriculture (DA) officials in Manila, nor the regional officials of these departments in the regional centers. In fact, these departments have consistently shown weak absorptive capacity for budgetary outlays for such projects. The money would move faster, and more effectively, if passed on to the local officials.

But people have to know how much money is provided to the local officials for building farm-to-market roads—and other infrastructure, for that matter—every year. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) should make the information available to all, especially the residents of the specific locality where such outlays are made to the governor or mayor. That way, citizens' groups can exercise vigilance and ensure that such funds are not diverted improperly. And when such diversions do happen and are detected by the public, accountability of such erring public officials must be asserted, and lead to proper punishment.

Until this happens, we may be better off holding back on those funds for farm-to-market roads, and providing remote farming communities with horses—and actually meet their needs much more cheaply.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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Gov't opens P30-M coco processing plant

By Christine A. Gaylican

A P30-MILLION coconut processing facility that will transform coconut into high-value products has been inaugurated in Calauag, Quezon, the Department of Agriculture said on Friday.

"The Calauag Integrated Coconut Processing Plant has a maximum capacity to process 20,000 nuts a day to produce coconut oil, skim milk, coconut flour, vinegar, charcoal and coconut fiber," Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said in an interview.

Lorenzo said there was a growing demand for processed coconut products in the world market that could generate $50-$75 million in potential export revenues annually.

"We are now exporting coconut oil to the United States, coconut fiber to China and activated carbon and biodiesel fuel additive to Japan," he noted. "There are new markets to tap."

The coconut processing plant will require some 9 million nuts a year. The Office of the President has instructed the DA and the National Council on Food Security and Job Creation co-chaired by Jose "Peping" Cojuangco to provide the coconut-farmer supplier the incentive to transform 40 centavos for every peso of earnings to buy shares of stocks in the plant.

The council has been tasked to identify 28 municipalities from all over the country where a similar coconut processing facility could be established.

"We target to replicate the project in other areas. Hopefully 10 here in Luzon, seven in the Visayas region and 11 in Mindanao," Cojuangco said in a separate statement.

In a related development, British firm D1 Oils Ltd. (UK) has forged an agreement with the Philippine Coconut Authority to develop cheaper biodiesel fuel that could be introduced in the local market and exported to other countries.

"This new joint venture project of the PCA and the UK-based firm would dispel claims by local oil firms that it would not be cost-efficient to produce biodiesel fuel domestically," PCA Administrator Danilo Coronacion said in an interview.

"It is not only coconut that would be developed as fuel substitute, other indigenous crops such as the *malunggay* and *tangan* were identified as biofuel crops," Coronacion noted.

D1 Oils will initially invest $2 million or P56 million to cultivate 10,000 hectares of land in the Bondoc Peninsula. The PCA would test D1 Oils' technology in the government-owned Nucleus Farm Development Project.

Investments in electronics seen missing $1-B target

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ELECTRONICS sector is unlikely to achieve its goal of attracting at least a billion-dollar worth of additional investments this year unless the country's business climate improves with the stepping in of an investor-friendly administration.

This was the comment made by international research firm Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. in its latest paper released last week. The comment was made immediately before Filipinos cast their votes for today's local and national elections.

"Hopefully, the likely victory of President Macapagal in the presidential election on May 10 (today) will give greater confidence to industry investors," Bear Stearns said.

Bear Stearns said the electronics industry might again be targeting too much when it set its expected new-entry investments to reach at least $1 billion this year. Considering that the industry already missed by a huge margin the same target in 2003, due to the perceived unfriendly business environment, it may again fail to reach the goal because needed reforms have yet to be instituted.

The business sector often considered the high cost and risk of doing business in the country as common factors adversely affecting the local business climate. The high cost is usually attributed to expensive labor and electric power, while the perceived risk was often blamed on security problems and court intervention on economic issues.

While the risk and cost factors have been seen during President Macapagal's term, some members of the business community expressed preference of giving her another chance at the presidency than entrusting the government to her strongest rival Fernando Poe Jr., a political neophyte whose strong showing in the polls was attributed solely to his popularity as an actor.

President Macapagal was tagged as the investors' favorite candidate after latest polls, which showed her lead over Poe, resulted in the strengthening of the peso and the softening of interest rates on government securities.

Bear Stearns said, however, that a Macapagal presidency should still undertake major reforms in several business areas to make the electronics industry regain its luster in the 1990s until the year 2000. The research firm noted the need to lower the cost of electricity and to ensure its availability to boost confidence in the sector.

"Moving the privatization of the publicly owned power companies through the new Senate will therefore be an important early test for the new president," it said.

The research firm noted that while the electronics sector expected $1 billion worth of new investments last year, it only realized $230 million.

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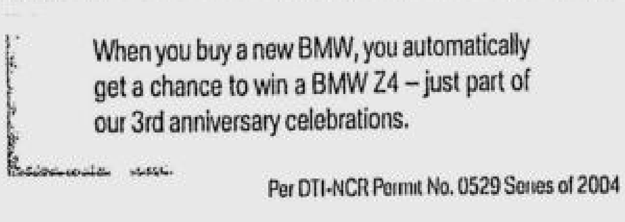

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Farmers group backs gov't corn program

THE LARGEST corn farmers cooperative in Mindanao has debunked a report that the hybrid corn area expansion (Hycare) program of the Department of Agriculture suffered delays because of the slow distribution of discount cards to farmer-beneficiaries.

According to Amado Magbanua, president of Maiscofa, the corn cooperative in South Cotabato, farmers belonging to his group received their discount cards as early as April 1, well ahead of the scheduled planting date for corn.

This was confirmed by Gualberto Insular, president of another cooperative based in the corn belt area of Sultan Kudarat, who said that farmers in his group even got their seed subsidies without any problems from seed dealers in their area.

DA records showed that a total of 72,716 farmers were given their discount cards as of end April. Of the total, 13,803 farmers were from Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato alone. Upon getting their discount cards the farmers immediately obtained the subsidies due them under the Hycare program.

Insular said he could not see a reason why Rodolfo Bioco, president of the PhilMaize, could criticize the program when thousands of legitimate corn farmers in Mindanao could attest to the benefits of the program in terms of raising their yields and incomes.

Two Mindanao-based seeds dealers said the allegation that some dealers refused to sell seeds to discount-card holders "without guaranteed payment" was a "total lie."

₱13B IN DEBT

Gov't seeks easier repayment terms

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT, hard-pressed to solve its budget deficit woes, said it would negotiate with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for concessional payment terms for the P13 billion it owed the central bank.

The amount represents the government's International Monetary Fund membership fees due this year and whose payment was advanced by the BSP.

A Finance official said the government was not inclined to pay in cash the P13 billion in obligations because such a move would worsen the country's budget deficit problems.

The BSP had agreed to pay the obligations of the government to the IMF on condition that it would be paid later.

The official said the government would seek for long-term and installment mode of payment so as not to adversely affect its budgetary program for the year. According to its 2004 budget schedule, the government hopes to trim down its deficit to P197.8 billion from P199.9 billion last year.

"We will try to maintain our deficit target by seeking a long-term payment schedule. We won't pay the P13 billion at once because there is no point in doing that," the finance official said.

The DOF, representing the national government, and the BSP were earlier in disagreement over who should shoulder the IMF dues. While the BSP wanted to collect from the government, the DOF said the BSP should not pressure the government to paying the amount because it had also benefited from the country's membership in the IMF.

The disagreement between the two forced the DOF to seek an opinion from the Department of Justice. The DOJ recently released its opinion, saying the dues should be shouldered by the national government.

The official said the DOF was not inclined to question the DOJ opinion. The source said, however, that the government would not prioritize the payment of the said IMF obligations in its budget program for the year because it could not afford missing its fiscal targets.

The source said the government could just pay the P13 billion on installment terms from savings or excess in the revenue collection of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

The deficit program for 2004 is expected to keep the government on track to meet its goal of having a balanced budget—or zero deficit—by 2009.

Jollibee plans further expansion overseas

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FAST-FOOD giant Jollibee Foods Corp. has identified potential big markets in Asia for its expansion activities.

Jollibee president Tony Tan Caktiong said he was looking at the possibility of expanding Jollibee's four-store network in Vietnam.

He is also studying the potential market in India.

He added that Jollibee would introduce the Chowking brand in Indonesia as the company expected growth in the Chinese fast food market there.

Tan Caktiong also said he was bullish about Jollibee's investments in China.

The company had completed its purchase of China's leading fast-food chain Yonghe King.

"We are aggressive in China. Right now they (Jollibee's businesses) are making money. We will make them grow faster, that's the challenge we are facing," he said.

Tan Caktiong also said the company was studying the potential market for Chinese food in Europe. The Jollibee group, he said, had received inquiries from interested parties but there were no immediate plans to tap this market for now.

Aside from its new Yonghe chain in China, the company runs Jollibee stores in Guam, Brunei, Hong Kong and Vietnam.

Jollibee plans to further grow its Yonghe's 80-store network in China but Tan Caktiong said it would start modestly in building its store network. Yonghe had planned to open 28 new stores this year but Jollibee has yet to decide whether to adopt this plan.

Jollibee agreed to pay $22.5 million for control of the Chinese food firm. Jollibee International (BVI) Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Jollibee, signed early this month a deal to buy 85 percent of Belmont Enterprises Ventures Ltd., the holding company of the Yonghe chain.

System-wide sales, which take into account sales through customers and franchises for Yonghe King grew 22.4 percent to $24 million last year despite the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS. It runs 80 stores in key cities in China.

Smart needs franchise amendment to avoid IPO

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission said Smart Communications would have to ask Congress to amend its franchise to be able to avoid going public not later than August this year, as required by its franchise.

NTC Chair Ronald Solis said that based on the preliminary evaluation by its legal department, Smart was answerable to Congress that approved its franchise.

Solis, stressed, however, that as Smart's regulator, the NTC would also have to approve any deferment of its public listing.

The NTC chief said Smart's case was similar to that of a broadcasting company that previously sought a deferment of its initial public offering which was mandated by its franchise.

"In the case of the broadcast company, the NTC ruled that since the case involved the suspension of the franchise, it was up to Congress to decide on it. The NTC could not act on it since it was not within our jurisdiction," said Solis.

The case of Smart could be more complex, according to the NTC, because the mobile phone company also secured a Certification of Public Convenience and Necessity from the NTC and this certificate required telcos to go public.

"An IPO is one of the conditions of the CPCN. We are still looking at the CPCN. We are studying our next move. I have a few more questions from our legal before the Commission could give its position on the Smart IPO," said Solis.

Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said the company was looking at various options to avoid this requirement of its franchise.

Smart said it could cite the prevailing poor market conditions as a reason for pushing back its IPO.

Negros co-op taps renewable energy supplier

THE CENTRAL Negros Electric Cooperative (Ceneco) recently signed a contract to purchase electricity from Talisay Bioenergy Inc., a 30-MW renewable power generation project.

Talisay Bioenergy Inc. will provide Ceneco consumers reliable, clean-and-green energy at reasonable rates. Talisay Bioenergy Inc. is a subsidiary of Bronzeoak Philippines, a joint venture between Bronzeoak Ltd. from the United Kingdom and Zabaleta and Co. from San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

This innovative power plant uses bagasse, a sugarcane by-product, as its main fuel source, thus protecting the environment by promoting recycling. The First Farmers Holding Corp. sugar mill in Talisay City, Negros Occidental, houses the plant.

"This is one of the most reliable forms of energy generation, a trend that has been implemented by many sugar mills abroad to improve efficiencies for their mills while providing grid stability through embedded generation to local cooperatives like Ceneco. The Talisay Bioenergy Inc. plant is the first of its kind in the country and will serve as a showcase for how a locally sourced fuel can be used to address our future energy needs," Ceneco president Eddie Guillem said.

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TRANSPARENCY BID

BSP tightens measures on bank securities, registry

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has tightened regulations on the securities custodianship and registry operations of banks and non-bank financial institutions to boost transparency of local securities transactions.

"It is the policy of the BSP to promote the protection of investors in order to gain their confidence and encourage their participation in the development of the domestic capital market," said Alberto Reyes, BSP deputy governor for bank supervision and examination said.

A securities custodian safeguards the securities of a client, holds title to the securities in a nominee capacity, executes purchase or sale orders, represents clients in corporate actions and conducts valuation.

A securities registry, on the other hand, maintains an electronic registry book, delivers confirmation of transactions, issues registry confirmation for transfers of ownership and prepares regular statement of securities balances as required by the owner.

In a recently issued circular, Reyes said banks and non-bank financial institutions may only act as securities custodian and/or registry upon prior approval of the Monetary Board.

Only BSP-supervised banks or non-bank financial institutions that have complied with the minimum capital accounts shall be qualified to apply for these functions.

For non-bank financial institutions, they must have an adjusted capital of P300 million or such amounts as may be required by the MB in the future.

The BSP is also requiring banks to:

- Have a risk-based capital adequacy ratio not lower than 12 percent;
- Have a comprehensive risk management system, with adequate risk measurement systems and appropriately structured risk limits;
- Comply with ceilings on credit accommodation to Dosri (directors, officer, stockholders and related interests) and single borrower's limit;
- Set up the prescribed allowances for probable losses, both general and specific; and,
- Have a CAMELS composite rating of at least "4," in a scale of one to five.

CAMELS is the acronym that refers to six key factors used in bank examination—capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk.

A BSP-accredited securities registry must be a third party with no subsidiary or affiliate relationship with the issuer of securities, while a BSP-accredited custodian must be a third party with no subsidiary or affiliate relationship with the issuer or seller of securities.

ERC expects more WB, USAID grants

AFTER receiving new information technology equipment and funding for its strategic planning exercises, the Energy Regulatory Commission expects to get more grants from the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development.

The World Bank recently provided technical assistance to the ERC for the conduct of a workshop and seminar for the formulation of the Rural Electrification Regulatory Framework.

The multilateral lending agency also helped the commission to secure a donation of information technology equipment from Castalia Strategic Advisors, which would help upgrade the agency's IT set-up.

The USAID, on the other hand, provided funding and consultancy services for the ERC's strategic planning session held in Tagaytay last month.

According to ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr., more assistance from the two foreign aid agencies would be appreciated as the ERC still lacked the resources to formulate investor-friendly and consumer-sensitive guidelines.

The ERC currently has no fiscal autonomy as its earnings go straight to the national coffers. Its operational expenses and capital expenditures depend on yearly budget allocations done through legislation. *Abigail L. Ho*

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 25, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 27, 2003
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2003
5. Approval of the 2003 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 27, 2003 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 26, 2004 will be entitled to notice of and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a **PROXY** to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2004. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 20, 2004, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 5, 2004

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES, INC.

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of **ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES, INC.**, will be held on 17 May 2004 at 4:00 p.m., at the Ballroom of Cebu City Marriott Hotel, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City.

The Agenda of the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Notice of Meeting
3. Determination of Quorum
4. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Stockholders' Meeting of 12 May 2003
5. Presentation of the President's Report
6. Approval of Annual Report and Financial Statements
7. Ratification of the Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors, Corporate Officers and Management up to 17 May 2004
7. Election of External Auditors
8. Election of Board of Directors
9. Other Business
10. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on 31 March 2004 are entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting. Registration will start at 2:00 p.m. and will end at 4:00 p.m. Kindly present any proof of identification, such as driver's license, passport, company I.D. or SSS/GSIS I.D. Aside from personal identification, representatives of corporate stockholders and other entities should also present a duly sworn secretary's certificate or a similar document showing his or her authority to represent the corporation or entity.

Should you be unable to attend the meeting, you may want to execute a proxy in favor of a representative. In accordance with the amended By-laws of the Corporation, proxies must be presented to the Secretary for inspection, validation and record at least seven (7) days prior to the opening of the stockholders' meeting. We enclose a proxy form for your convenience.

For those unable to attend the Stockholders' Meeting in Cebu, a Stockholders' Briefing will be conducted in Manila on 19 May 2004 at 2:30 p.m. at Rizal Ballroom C, Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Makati City.

For the Board of Directors.

M. JASMINE S. OPORTO
Corporate Secretary
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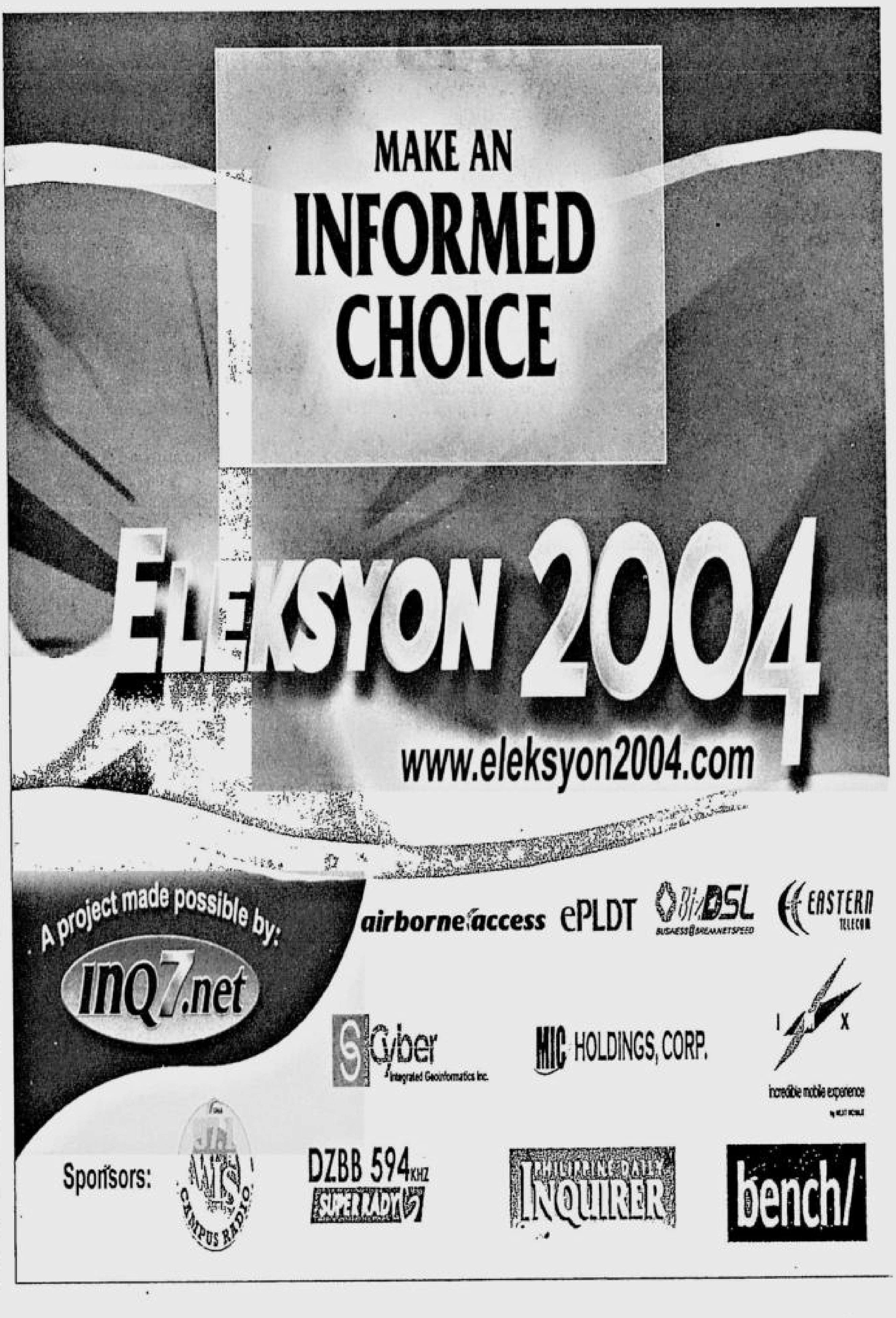

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OIL PRICE SURGE

Analysts: Asian oil importers hardest hit

SINGAPORE—With crude oil prices reaching a 13-year high of US$40 a barrel, Asia's oil importing countries braced for the possibility of higher unemployment, inflation and curtailed growth as their economies absorb the full impact of the price hike, analysts said.

Oil for June delivery rose as high as $40 Friday on the New York Mercantile Exchange before settling at $39.93.

"The countries that import a lot of oil like India, China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, will be most negatively impacted," said Adrian Loh, a Singapore-based regional energy analyst with Merrill Lynch.

The last time the front-month futures contract settled above $40 was on Oct. 11, 1990, when oil was valued at $40.42 per barrel leading up to the Persian Gulf War. In today's dollars, adjusting for inflation, that would be equivalent to $56.83, according to the US Energy Department.

The higher prices could hurt Asia's economies just as many have started to recover from the economic fallout of the Iraq war and the outbreaks of SARS and bird flu.

As long as "prices remain in the US$30s, Asian economies will suffer," said David Thurtell, commodities strategist at Commonwealth Bank of Australia in Sydney.

The International Energy Agency, a watchdog for oil importers, warned in a report Monday that a US$10 price increase per barrel of oil sustained over one year could trim about 0.8 percent off Asia's overall economic growth, bringing higher unemployment and inflation.

Thurtell said he expects oil prices to fall back to the low-30s in the medium term, while Loh said prices will stay "generally high in the long term" mainly because of the strength of Opec and the lack of alternative supplies.

"Lots of people still labor under false impression that OW is driven by dissent, but it's a very strong cartel and they have managed to keep the price within a very tight band," Loh said.

Merrill Lynch recently upgraded its long term outlook for oil to US$28 a barrel.

For India, which imports about 70 percent of its oil, the price hikes are "a major cause for concern," said Anjan Roy, an economist with the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

For China, the world's second largest oil importer, higher oil prices may not be enough to slow down the country's juggernaut growth in the short term. That's because the two leading oil companies, Sinopec and Petrochina, are majority owned by the government, meaning that prices can be controlled, said Loh.

"In the short to medium term, (high oil prices) may not be a big speed hump for the Chinese growth engine, but if they persist for much longer, it is going to be a problem," Loh said.

For nearby Taiwan however, the impact is likely to be keenly felt.

"The oil price hike could add to wages and production costs and further cut down profits," said economist Wu Chung-shu with the research organization Academia Sinica. He added that some companies may be forced to shut down.

Taiwan's export-driven economy could suffer if the increase in oil prices slows world economic growth, Wu said.

In Thailand, the government has spent 7 billion Thai baht (US$175 million) in subsidies to oil companies to hold down gasoline and diesel prices since Jan. 10.

But on Friday Bangkok announced it would raise premium gasoline prices by 60 satang (about 2 US cents) per liter to a record high of 17.59 baht (44 US cents).

Only the few net exporters of gas and oil in the region—Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei—stand to gain from oil's current price tag. *AP*

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US exec defends Bush's approach to free trade

WASHINGTON—United States President George W. Bush's top trade negotiator on Friday insisted that the administration is making good progress in pursuing its free trade agenda and rejected criticism that it should be focusing on striking bigger deals.

US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick said the United States and Australia would sign a free trade agreement negotiated earlier this year on May 18 and that prospects for getting it approved by Congress this year appeared to be brightening.

He said the administration also had hopes of getting congressional approval of a separate free trade pact with Morocco, which the White House sees as an important signal of US support for moderate Arab countries.

Zoellick spoke at a trade conference sponsored by the Institute for International Economics, a Washington think tank which released a study questioning the administration for focusing on agreements with smaller countries rather than going after deals with economically stronger countries such as South Korea and Japan.

"Big-stakes free trade agreements would yield the biggest payoffs for US businesses and farmers," said Jeffrey Schott, a trade expert at the institute.

Zoellick, however, argued that deals with Japan and South Korea were not possible at the current time because of the refusal of those countries to lower barriers in agriculture.

He said he believed the free trade agreements the United States was negotiating would put pressure on other countries to start their own negotiations or risk being put at a disadvantage in the US market.

"Every region is open (for free trade deals) from Asia to Africa to Latin America," he said.

There has been talk in Congress of packaging the Australia and Morocco bills and possibly a deal still being negotiated with five countries in sub-Saharan Africa for passage before lawmakers adjourn in the early fall for election campaigning.

Zoellick said Friday that he sensed support was building in Congress for going ahead with at least some of the agreements this year even though it is an election-year when lawmakers often like to avoid votes on contentious trade issues. *AP*

China economy seen to be cooling down

BEIJING—Some sectors of China's overheated economy, including real estate, have shown signs of cooling, the China Daily said on Saturday.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told Reuters last week that China is committed to forceful measures to cool its dangerously fast-growing economy, which has benefited global growth but, left unchecked, has the potential to drag it down.

Investment in real estate and some other overheated industries has slowed and demand for major commodities would ease during the second quarter, according to the China Daily, citing a Ministry of Commerce report.

The supply of 462 categories of commodities—or 77 percent of all categories—would outstrip demand in the second quarter, the newspaper said.

The Chinese economy logged 9.7 percent growth in the first quarter of the year, but faces resurgent inflation because of expansion of the money supply, bank credit and fixed asset investment.

China would manage to balance oil supply and demand through expansion of oil exploration, growing imports and increased output of oil products, the newspaper said.

But an electricity shortage would become more serious as the summer draws nearer, it said, adding that haphazard investment and low expansion were to blame for the worst energy shortage in more than a decade.

Domestic output and imports of steel would increase rapidly by the end of the second quarter, the newspaper said.

Fertilizer production and imports would see steady growth but exports would fall sharply. Supply would be enough to meet needs, it said.

Cotton and edible oil imports would continue to rise, the newspaper said. Grain reserves would be lower but would hold steady during the second quarter.

Coal output would continue to grow and falling exports would help meet growing domestic demand, the newspaper said. *Reuters*

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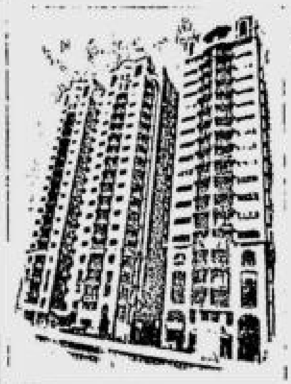

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late HANSON B. BAEL was extrajudicially settled per affidavit of self-adjudication as per Doc No. 597, Page 17, Book No. V, Series of 2004 under Notary Public Atty. Gregorio E. Maunahan of Calamba City, Laguna.
(PDI May 10, 17, & 24, 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
website: www.afp.mil.ph
email: pid@info.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-bidding)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all Suppliers who are themselves the Manufacturer to apply for eligibility and to bid in the Single-Stage bid process for the **Supply and Delivery of 40mm Grenade Launcher** of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of **Twelve Million Thirty Six Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Pesos (Php 12,036,480.00).** Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program CY 2000 funds.

Bid documents shall only be available for issuance starting **May 03, 2004** until **June 10, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of **One Thousand Two Hundred Pesos (Php 1,200.00)**, which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **May 18, 2004 at 9:00 am** (local time) at **Silid Panday Pira**, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of bid envelopes is on **June 11, 2004 at 9:00 am** (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at **09:30 am** at Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

(Original Signed)
REYNALDO D RIVERA
Major General AFP
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – May 3 & 10, 2004)

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NOTICE OF VACANT POSITIONS

SUC PRESIDENT I

for:
Surigao State College of Technology (SSCT)
Surigao City

Minimum Qualifications for the Position:

1. Filipino Citizen;
2. Holder of an earned doctorate degree;
3. At least 5 years of relevant and proven administrative leadership and management skills;
4. Must be a Career Executive Service Officer (CESO) or holder of any similar eligibility;
5. Should have no pending nor conviction of any administrative case;
6. Known for probity and moral integrity.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, interested persons must be able to submit the following clearances:

a. Ombudsman;
b. Civil Service Commission;
c. National Bureau of Investigation;
d. Medical Certificate.

Application/Nomination should be accompanied by:

a. Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and documentary evidences relative to the qualifications above stated;
b. Proposed Vision, Mission and Thrusts for the College;
c. Result of Neuro-Psychiatric examination in a sealed envelope.

Applicants are requested to submit seven (7) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents not later than June 10, 2004 to:

DIR. JOANNA B. CUENCA, Ph.D., CESO III
Chairman
Search Committee for the Presidency
Commission on Higher Education
Caraga Region
J.C. Aquino Ave., Butuan City

For more details, please contact Telefax No. (085) 826-6346, (086) 232-7798 or (086) 7741.
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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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No. M-02-01-148 TIN No. 111-451-851-000

By authority vested in me by the Labor Code and the Omnibus Rules Implementing the Code, and payment of the license fee in the amount of SIX THOUSAND PESOS (P6,000.00) ONLY having been made as per Official Receipt Number 6530541 Y dated June 25, 2002 and posting of the appropriate cash and surety bonds of P25,000.00 and P100,000.00 respectively, having been complied with, this LICENSE is hereby granted to Ms. Teofila R. Begonia to establish, direct and/or manage the

PETAL PROMOTIONS AND MERCHANDISING AGENCY
(Formerly: Petal Manpower Services)
283 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City

This license which expires on 12 June 2004 is valid only in the Philippines. Transfer or used by any other person or entity renders this license null and void.

WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of National Capital Region Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila, Philippines, this 30 day of May 2002.

(Sgd.) ALEX E. MARAAN
Regional Director

(PDI – May 10, 2004)

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It is with solemn hearts
that the family of

TERESITA SISON LIMJOCO

Wishes to announce her union
with her Creator last May 8, 2004.

She is survived by her spouse **Edgardo J. Limjoco**; her four sons **Danny, Eddie, Rene, Neil,** and their families.

Her cremated remains shall be at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City from May 12 to May 14, 2004.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm.
For You are at my side, Your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

VICTORINA MELEBO ONGPIN

Peacefully joined her Creator, her husband Cesar (†)
and daughter Nilda (†) on May 8, 2004 at the age of 86.

Her children **Lirio** and **Mingoy Mapa, Vicki** and **Tony Perlas**(†); Mapa grandchildren **Dondi** and **Cherry, Lorvi, Mardi** and **Otic, Cidni** and **Lyn, Anali** and **Dave, Mitzi, Cheri** and **Luigi**; Perlas grandchildren **Miguel** and **Dada, Noel** and **Via**; brother **Alfonso Melebo**; sister **Virginia M. Ramos**; her great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness.

Her body lies in state at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on May 12, 2004, Wednesday, at the North Cemetery, after the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass in Santuario de San Antonio.

Only
goodness
and love
will pursue
me all the
days of my
life; I will
dwell in the
house of
the Lord for
years to
come..."
Psalm 23:6

ATTY. BENIGNO L. VIVAR, JR.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on May 7, 2004.

His beloved wife **GLORIA**; children and in-laws **BENJIE & A. BENZON & MAPET, DEY & ARIS, BENNETTE & REN,** and **DODAY**; brothers and sisters **ADING, PITS, HENS** and **PONSING**; grandchildren **RAPHAEL, PIA, PRINCESS, DANA, ENZO** and **POCHOLO**; nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the **Arlington Memorial Chapels,** G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City, until Tuesday, May 11, 2004 (12:00 noon) and will be brought to his hometown in **San Isidro, Hagonoy, Bulacan.**

Interment will be on Wednesday, May 12, 2004 at San Juan Cemetery, San Juan, Hagonoy, Bulacan after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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DEATH ANNIVERSARY
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In Loving Memory
on the
13th Death Anniversary
of

DANIEL M. RAGASA

January 3, 1915 – May 10, 1991

To Our Everdearest Daddy:

The years that have passed have in no way diminished the pain of your loss in our midst, but we know that you are in better hands with Him, the Almighty God. For now, the memories of your goodness, your unselfish love for all of us, and our wonderful times together will fill our hearts and minds till we join you for all eternity.

We love you ...

Loving wife Doring; and children Myrna, Dante, Eddie, Doris and Daisy. We request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

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DINNER/GLASS WARE - Asstd. Western/Chinese Restaurant Dinnerware, Asstd. Glassware
LAUNDRY - (2) BRAUNEX 400NEDT Washers, BRAUN NORMAN 123H-SH, PERFECTA DONIN 30, WASCATOR TT900, CISSELL 36URD, IPSO 165 Heavy Duty Dryers, CHICAGO 90, CISSELL, WASCATOR Ironing Machines, (2) CISSELL Form Finishers, SALTER 200 Kg Cap Laundry Scale
HOUSEKEEPING - HAKO, HOOVER, ELECTROLUX, EUROCLEAN Heavy Duty Vacuum Cleaners, HAKO, EUROCLEAN, FLOOR SHINE Heavy Duty Floor Polishers, Asstd SINGER Sewing Machines; Asstd Chemicals/Cleaning Materials, Asstd. Bed Linen, Asstd Towels, Linen Trolleys, Housekeeping Trolleys
GUEST ROOMS - Luggage Tables, Upholstered Chairs, Upholstered/Rattan Sofa Sets; Asstd Head Boards, King/Double/Single Beds, Mirrors, Glass/Marble Top Tables, Storage Cabinets, Bed Side Tables w/ Radio, Asstd Light Fittings, Electric Shaver Sockets,
ESCALATORS/ELEVATORS - (5) MITSUBISHI Guest Elevators 2,500 kg cap ; (3) MITSUBISHI Service Elevators c/w Steel Cable/Winch/Controls, (2) SANLINE Hydraulic Escalators
HOTEL SERVICES - Cooling Towers, BAILEY, COPELMATIC Condensers, Asstd. Pipe, Asstd Ductings, YORK Large Cap Air Conditioning Units, INGERSOLL-RAND, GARIVER DENVER Reciever Mounted Air Compressors, (5) KEWANEE Steam Boilers; Asstd Valves, Asstd Pumps, (2) YORK Heavy Duty Chillers, (57) Air Handling Units w/ Ducting/Pipes/Valves
OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT - 3 / 4 Drawer Filing Cabinets, Asstd Clerical Desks; Asstd White Boards, Personnel Lockers, Asstd Fabric Upholstered Clerical Chairs, OLYMPIA Manual Typewriters, PANASONIC Fax Machines, AVR's, PANASONIC Video Camera, MOSLER/CHUBB Combination Safe
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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Banilad, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA), Region VII, Cebu City is inviting all interested vessel or barge owners/operators to apply for eligibility and to bid under the Letter Agreement for Vessel/Barge Hire for the shipment of rice from Cebu City to various destinations as indicated below:

VOLUME SCHEDULED FOR SEA DISPERSAL

Destination		No. of Lots	Quantity/ Lot (bags)	Freight Rate/Bag	Approved Budget for the Contract/Lot
Province	Port				
Bantayan Is.	Santa Fe	11	7,000	17 00	119,000 00
Camote Is.	Poro	2	11,000	14 90	163,900 00
	Tudela	2	6,000	15 40	92,400 00
Bohol	Tagbilaran	4	18,000	18 30	329,400 00
		1	16,000	18 30	292,800 00
	Ubay	2	6,000	15 40	92,400 00
Negros Or.	Dumaguete	4	18,000	17 00	306,000 00
		1	28,000	17 00	476,000 00
Siquijor	Larena	1	15,000	17 00	255,000 00
N. Leyte	Tacloban	2	32,000	21 80	697,600 00
		2	25,000	21 80	545,000 00
		2	18,000	21 80	392,400 00
		1	17,000	21 80	370,600 00
	Ormoc	1	13,000	18 50	240,500 00
S. Leyte	Maasin	2	15,000	18 50	277,500 00
		1	17,000	18 50	314,500 00
E. Samar	Borongan	3	18,000	28 00	504,000 00
		2	13,000	28 00	364,000 00
	Guiuan	1	20,000	23 50	470,000 00
N. Samar	San Jose	2	30,000	22 20	666,000 00
		1	18,000	22 20	399,600 00
		1	17,000	22 20	377,400 00
W. Samar	Calbalogan	4	25,000	19 80	495,000 00
	Calbayog	1	13,000	19.80	257,400 00
		1	12,000	19 80	237,600 00
Maguindanao	Cotabato	2	25,000	25 50	637,500 00
		1	17,000	25.50	433,500.00

Summary of Bidding Procedures:

The Bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A Single Stage Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the Instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B. Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest on a per lot basis to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee *(RBAC)* to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of the contract.

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Date	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	May 4-12, 2004	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Pre-Bidding Conference	May 14, 2004	9:00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	May 25, 2004	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NFA, Region VII, Cebu City after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P5,000.00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned in the following numbers: (032) 232-1939 and (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and may accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO J. ADORABLE
Assistant Regional Director
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - May 4 & 10, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Cebu, thru its BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC), invites all interested manufacturers, suppliers, dealers and/or distributors to apply for eligibility and to submit BIDS for the SUPPLY of various medical/laboratory dental equipment requirements as follows:

	Items	Quantity	Budget	Requisitioner	Adv. No.
1.	Cardiac Monitor w/ Defibrillator	1 unit	P580,000.00	R.L. Maningo Mem. Hosp.	83
2.	Dental Chair w/ Accessories	1 unit	P274,610.00	I. Kintanar Mem. Hosp.	84
3.	Defibrillator w/ Monitor, etc.	1 unit	P770,000.00	I. Kintanar Mem. Hosp.	85
4.	Autoclave Machine	1 unit	P140,000.00	Oslob Dist. Hospital	86
5.	Clinical Chemistry	1 unit	P200,000.00	Danao Dist. Hospital	87
6.	ECG Machine - Portable	1 set	P200,000.00	Danao Dist. Hospital	87
7.	X-ray Machine w/ Accessories	1 unit	P1,650,000.00	Tuburan Dist. Hospital	88
8.	Anesthesia Machine w/ ventilator	1 unit	P2,100,000.00	Barili District Hospital	89
9.	Suction Machine - Heavy Duty	1 unit	P220,000.00	Tuburan Dist. Hospital	90
10.	Readacrit Hematocrit Centrifuge	1 unit	P100,000.00	Badian Dist. Hospital	91
11.	Autoclave (Steam Sterilizer)	1 unit	P410,000.00	Badian Dist. Hospital	91
12.	Delivery Table, Suction Pump, etc.	various	P824,000.00	Balamban Dist. Hospital	93

In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, the bidders should conform to the eligibility criteria as prescribed under Section 23.6 of the approved IRR-A of Republic Act No. 9184.

Eligibility requirements and bid forms tender documents and request for quotation shall be available at the BAC Secretariat Provincial General Services Office, Dep-Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City, within the government prescribed office hours, starting on Tuesday, **May 04, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Hundred Pesos Only (Php 100.00).

Pre-bid conference will be conducted on Friday, **May 14, 2004** at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC conference room, Provincial General Services Office, Dep-Ed Building, Capitol, Cebu City.

Sealed envelopes containing the duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be received by the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address not later than 10:00 in the morning on Wednesday, **May 26, 2004** and shall be publicly opened thereafter

All particulars relative to eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids, post-qualification and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Province of Cebu reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formality therein and to accept bids considered complying, responsive and most advantageous to the government.

For inquiry, please contact the Office of the BAC Secretariat at Telephone Nos 253-9614, 253-3995 & 416-6065.

These requirements are posted at the BAC Bulletin Board, PGSO, Dep Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO T. HABIN
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - May 4 & 10, 2004)

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The PAX 3 days-2 nights tour package takes you to both Honda Bay Islands and Underground River, two of Palawan's most popular destinations. Trips to these island jewels are made pleasurable in the company of your very own PAX tour host who pledges to make your stay an overall delightful experience. Like a true scout, your tour host may be depended on to offer assistance whenever needed.

The Honday Bay Islands Cruise via Catamaran promises fun activities such as snorkeling, fish feeding, Snake Island activities, plus an island barbecue lunch. MB Legend of the Sea offers first class boat accommodation for the exclusive use of PAX guests. It has a 40 pax capacity and is equipped with an audio-video system, dining facilities, a bar and restrooms. Expect a relaxed, comfortable and leisurely cruise through the bay. Now, that's a lot to look forward to on your first day.

On the second day of your stay, PAX summons you to an Underground River Adventure. Aboard a paddle fiberglass banca, you will be taken into the recesses of an 8 km-long cave that acts as a gallery of century-old stalactite and stalagmite formations. Fabulous, awe-inspiring finds await you as you traverse the dark enclave and still waters of the Underground River. A side strip to the Vietnam Village later in the day caps your fun adventure.

Video presentations during land travels on board PAX vans are value-added services to ensure that you get the most out of your Palawan Experience. These would include a brief on the day's itinerary and what to expect, tips and suggestions on how to enjoy, information on available activities and trivia on Palawan - its history, culture, people and its treasures of natural beauty.

With Pax's all-in worry-free offer, its P7,999 net per adult tour package fee comes out very reasonably priced. For this amount, PAX already includes a 3 day and 2 night stay at the Legend Hotel Palawan, all meals with an option to dine out on your second night at the most recommended restaurant, a Honda Bay Island Hopping cruise aboard the MB Legend of the Sea, an Underground River Adventure, and not to forget, a tour host at your beck and call.

Also, up to two kids, aged below 11 years old and sharing bed with adult companions are free on all meals and tours. This is a special treat for traveling families in search of bonding time and lots of fun.

Given the innate beauty of Palawan coupled with the Pax worry-free tour package, you've nothing but a most memorable and exhilaratingly fun experience to enjoy. Because spending time with your loved ones as you discover things and try on new experiences, while basking in the glory of nature's masterpieces, is about the most fun time you'll ever have.

JOLLIBEE HAS NEW TALENTS UNDER ITS WINGS

As the Jollibee family keeps on expanding, more and more stars are added in its prestigious list of endorsers. Now, it's the turn of young pop stars Sarah Geronimo and Mark Bautista to take center stage in the new Jollibee commercial. The two Viva talents recently inked a contract with the country's fast food giant in promoting Jollibee's burger line, the Yumburger and the Yumburger with Cheese. Viva Entertainment's big boss, Vic del Rosario, and Jollibee's marketing manager, Lot Legaspi, were present for this Jollibee milestone. Also present during the contract signing were the talents' family members, Sarah's parents and Mark's brother, to lend their support to the young singers. Sarah and Mark are the first-place and second-place winners, respectively, of Viva Entertainment's Star for a Night.

Nippon Life Philippines
com.ph

NIPPON LIFE PHILS CELEBRATES LIFE INSURANCE CONSCIOUSNESS WEEK

Nippon Life Phils joined the rest of the life insurance industry in celebration of the 2003 Life Insurance Consciousness Week. The theme for this year's celebration is Life Insurance For Everyone (Life). Shown in photo are members of Nippon Life's employees and agency force who represented the company during the Life Week's kickoff activities at the Atrium of SM Megamall. Nippon Life Philippines is a joint venture between Japanese insurer: Nippon Life Japan and the Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC). Nippon Life Japan is ranked as the world's largest mutual life insurer by Fortune Magazine in its 2003 Global 500 issue.

KLM's frequent flier feast

A BLISSFUL vacation is an entire weekend with your favorite travel companion at a far away, exotic land with breath-taking sights, culminating with a banquet fit for a king.

The ultimate trip - if you have all these for free!

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines planned out this perfect weekend getaway as a token of appreciation for their top ten frequent fliers together with their companion of choice. The European carrier flew ten couples to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia via KLM's World Business Class for a vacation they'll never forget.

The ten loyal KLM patrons and their companions enjoyed the luxury of free accommodations and a tour of the enchanting city of Kuala Lumpur topped by a momentous fete at the world-famous telecommunications tower overlooking the "city of lights".

KLM's frequent fliers and their companions got a taste of delectable authentic Malay cuisine at the Restoran Seri Melayu at the KL tower. Known for the breathtaking view, the restaurant rotates an amazing 360 degrees at the height of over 400 meters above the ground.

One of the KLM patrons enthused, "This is an unforgettable adventure...the kids would've had fun here! Next time around we should take them along!"

All twenty passengers were nothing short of thrilled, delighted and impressed by KLM's show of hospitality to their most loyal customers.

"This is our way of saying thank you to our frequent fliers who continue to inspire us to provide valued relations through high quality service," said KLM sales manager Jose Laurente Jr.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines flies five times weekly from Manila to Europe and its destinations span through the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and Central, South and North America.

L'OREAL SIGNS UP WITH IDS LOGISTICS

IDS Logistics (Philippines) Inc, a leading provider of value-chain logistics services and a member of the Li & Fung Group, was awarded a renewed three-year contract by L'Oreal Philippines Inc for the latter's national warehousing and delivery requirements. The business relationship between these two companies began in 1999. Today, ISD Logistics' services cover all product lines of L'Oreal Philippines Inc. Shown in photo are (seated, from left) Robert Pearce, IDS GM-operations; Emmanuel Bautista, IDS general manager; Vicente Dinglasan, IDS president; Paul-Henri Duillet, L'Oreal Phils managing director; Joaquin Abola, L'Oreal Phils GM for finance and administration; Ed Fausto, L'Oreal Phils supply chain manager; (standing from left) Joecar Garcia, IDS operations manager; Filipina Baltazar, IDS finance controller; Gatchie Despojo, IDS business systems manager; Dina Pilapil, IDS commercial director and Rey Bernardo, IDS finance manager.

ST. MATTHEW COLLEGE OF RIZAL VISITS INQUIRER

More than 100 students from St. Matthew College of Rizal receive a briefing on printing press operations from line supervisor Melchor Dela Peña as part of their Inquirer Educational Tour.

TANAUAN CONSULTATIONS

Sonia Torres-Aquino, Tanauan City business-civic personality, believes that its is only in direct consultations with the people that sustainable programs can be implemented to succeed. These forays have resulted in various projects that have benefited Tanauan through the years. Ate Sonia and a group of concerned citizens called Bagong Barkada ng Barangay, led by lawyer Junjun Trinidad, believe that transparency is the only way to eradicate graft in governance.

RUBBER BOATS FOR RESCUE VOLUNTEERS OF PAF

Pink Patio Boracay recently launched their search and rescue rubber boats for the use of the search and rescue volunteers of the Philippine Air Force reservists in case of emergencies in the island of Boracay. Shown are Philippine Air Force Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan (2nd from right) with Col. Nestor Levanza, RATSW Commander, Lt. Col. Charles Uy, 22nd ARG Commander and president and owner of Pink Patio Boracay are being briefed by search and rescue volunteers of PAF reservists headed by Dennis dela Torres during the launching ceremony

Sogo Home & Office Center summer promo

FEELING weary and desiccated this hot season? Liven up and enjoy summer's fun vibes instead as Sogo Home & Office Center brings you the latest, hottest home and office collection this summer. Choose from the wide range of audio-video to hip and techie digital cameras, chic polyphonic cellphones, houseware and elegant furniture varieties offered at the best possible prices. All items come from renowned manufacturers worldwide.

Cool promotions are also offered to customers who shop at Sogo this month. You can take home one of the amazing and cool summer freebies with Sogo's FANzy Prizes promo. Just make the minimum purchase on any electric fan until May 31, 2004 to avail of the freebies.

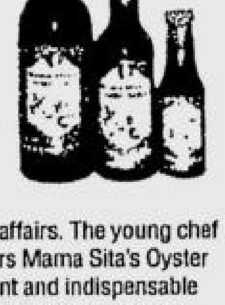
Use your credit card and take advantage of the 0 percent Interest offer on top-brand appliances. You not only get to own your dream appliance but you definitely save more money, as you don't pay the interest charge.

Simply shop at any Sogo store for the trendy summer items you need. Various merchandise are available for your summer getaways in the great outdoors.

Have a comfortable summer and spend more quality time with your family. Sogo Home & Office Center is at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Novaliches, Glorietta 1, Ali Mall, Festival Supermall, Tutuban Centermall and Zabarte Town Center. For details, please call 911-5772 or 632-0672.

ProductFILES

A chef's affair with Mama Sita's Oyster Sauce



ANNA Salvacion, is a food lover who owns a catering business in Cabanatuan City. Now only on her third year as a caterer, she counts among her major clients prominent families and business establishments in Cabanatuan City who rely on her to provide food for special affairs. The young chef reveals that she considers Mama Sita's Oyster Sauce her most important and indispensable ingredient. Many of the dishes in her menu choices require the full-bodied flavor that oyster sauce provides and the Mama Sita's brand comes closest to her discriminating taste.

Tender Juicy
Pure Foods

'GREAT FOOD IDEAS' AT SM

Bulacenos were treated to a week-long feature of food ideas and recipes as the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center (SMPFC) recently held 'Great Food Ideas' cooking demonstration inside the Super SM Hypermarket. SMPFC's culinary and baking experts shared new recipes using Pure Foods and Magnolia products that will surely bring new life to everyday meals from soups and salads down to desserts. For more delicious recipes and exciting culinary events, log on to www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legaspi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

JUST OUTSIDE YOUR DOOR

No need to take a trip out of town to cool down or engage in exciting activities during bright summer days. At The Lakeshore, fishing, sailing and kayaking are but a few of the numerous pastimes you and your family can enjoy, just outside your door! The Lakeshore is a world-class residential, commercial and recreational development project of Central Country Estate, Inc., located at Kilometer 71 of the North Luzon Expressway, Mexico, Pampanga. This self-contained community boasts of its 12-hectare man-made lake framed by the majestic panorama of Mount Arayat. At The Lakeshore, everyday is a vacation. For inquiries, you may call 1800-10thelake, (02) 722 2766 or (045) 860 4554

PALS OFFICERS OATH TAKING

The officers of the Philippine Association of Law Schools (Pals) recently took their oaths of office before the Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide. Led by its president, FEU Law dean Andres Bautista (fifth from right), the other officers are (from left) Emerson Aquende (Aquinas). Corazon Valencia (University of San Carlos), Nelson Lo (University of Negros Oriental), Myles Bejar (Silliman), Hernando Perez Jr. (University of Batangas). Romulo Borja (Xavier), Zacarias Bedona (Central Philippines University), Ruperto Sampoleo (Araullo) and Mariano Magsalin (Arellano)

The bumpy road to modern elections . . .

From page B14

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Status quo

Fast forward to May 2004. A few days before the May 10 elections, the Supreme Court issued a "status quo order" stopping the Comelec from implementing Phase Three of its modernization program.

Phase Three is an electronic transmission project using very small aperture terminals (VSAT) or satellites to send data remotely from far-flung areas to the Comelec's headquarters in Manila.

The decision came after opposition lawyer Sixto Brillantes filed a petition asking the high tribunal to force the Comelec to discontinue the project, which was designed as the poll body's "unofficial" quick count, something the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) is already doing for free.

In its order, the high tribunal said that Phase Three (electronic transmission) was still tied to Phase Two (automated counting and canvassing of votes) that was junked. Therefore its earlier decision to scrap the latter project was still in effect until the poll body could argue otherwise.

Commissioner Resurreccion Borra eventually revealed to Infotech that he and three other commissioners opposed the electronic transmission project, saying it had no "legal, technical and financial basis."

Borra also disclosed that some political parties, Namfrel and a group of information technology experts, expressed reservations about the project.

However, Abalos, he said, insisted that the project be implemented.

Who's to blame?

Looking back at what had happened in the attempt to modernize elections in the Philippines, information technology professional Augusto Lagman said that the "Comelec is the one to blame" in the country's failure to modernize elections this year.

Lagman is one of the most vocal critics of the Comelec's modernization plans way back when there was in-fighting among the commissioners of the poll body up until the filing of the ITFP petition to the Supreme Court. Lagman is also a member of the ITFP.

Ironically, Lagman was part of a technical advisory group helping former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod evaluate and later draft a law that would become the basis of the modernization of electoral process in the country.

Last month, Lagman and Abalos met in an event launching an election-related web service. Both became engaged in a verbal tussle after Lagman confronted the Comelec head about the poll body's bungled IT projects.

Lagman did not mince his words as he pointed out that the Comelec already knew that the winning bidder did not qualify for the bid, and yet went ahead with the project.

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Ineligible

The ITFP petition to the Supreme Court focused on the eligibility of Mega Pacific eSolutions to join the project after it found out that the group was formed only a few weeks before the bidding for the Phase Two of the poll body's modernization project.

Lagman had already suspected Mega Pacific's intent to bid, knowing that it wouldn't qualify.

"Why did they bother to bid if they knew they weren't qualified? It seems that there was complicity happening," he said.

An IT industry official familiar with the project, however, denied that there was complicity between the Comelec and Mega Pacific.

Declining to be named, the information technology executive said that several factors played in the Comelec's failure to implement the project to automate the counting and canvassing of votes.

While he also agreed that the Comelec was "more at fault," the poll body's failure to communicate its plans and actions properly raised more suspicions about the bid being rigged or some collusion between Comelec and Mega Pacific officials.

"Comelec's pride was hurt. Still, it should have encouraged consultation even with people who were attacking them. They should have not been defensive," the IT executive said.

Since the Comelec had little time back then to implement one of the largest IT government projects in the country, the poll body was "rushing" the project, thus eventually stumbling in the end, the IT executive said.

"I think there was no hanky panky. I think Abalos was just being a politician who wanted to leave a legacy. It was his chance to show the world how the country can have automated elections," the IT executive added.

The IT executive also felt that the Comelec failed to defend itself at the Supreme Court.

"The failure of the Comelec to implement this project speaks of public accountability," ITFP president Cynthia Mamon said.

Command responsibility

She said that since Abalos was at the helm of the Comelec, he was expected to "do things right."

Mamon said that Abalos "should have abided by government rules" and listened to the industry leaders trying to voice their opinions, albeit negative, about the IT projects.

Backed with years of implementing government IT projects as a former executive of the Department of Science and Technology, Mamon said that Abalos should have "thought through the process before releasing money" for the projects.

"This was an opportunity for him to leave his legacy. But as the saying goes, it takes years to build a name, and one broad stroke to destroy it," she added.

Mamon believes that the Comelec's leadership had a lot to do with its failure to implement its modernization program.

"Remember that the technology was not the problem in this case. It was the head of the Comelec not following rules. Computerization is a means for change and government should aim to make voting easier for the people," she said.

Philippine Computer Society president Bing Van Tooren, for her part, said that Abalos was willing to "listen." It was, however, a bigger task to get everyone on board.

Van Tooren was part of the team of IT experts tapped by the Comelec for project management of Phase Two of the poll body's modernization program.

"They we're worried that the computerization of elections would be a big change," she said, referring to Congress, and people at the Comelec.

To see the enemy

Abalos, however, "was his own worst enemy," one source familiar with the Comelec head said.

Forces were often pulling him toward different directions, thereby his decisions were often affected, the source revealed.

Abalos' tendency to railroad projects like his insistence to push for the electronic but unofficial quick count was revealed by Commissioner Resurreccion Borra to Infotech last week.

When asked for Abalos' intent for pushing through with the quick count, Borra replied: "Ask him, don't ask me. I don't want to answer for him."

Borra also admitted last week that he was forced to sign a resolution to approve the unofficial quick count project despite his objections.

"I signed with the condition that my dissent would be put on record. He was asking all commissioners to sign the resolutions."

"I objected to it because the IT community, all political parties, and Namfrel opposed the project. That was my legal basis," he added.

He also disclosed that other commissioners opposed the project but they did not put their objections on the record.

Looking ahead, Borra said that "proper information dissemination" should be in order for Comelec projects to succeed.

"This will bring credibility to us and the projects," he added.

Borra said that the Comelec automation projects failed because of bad public relations hitting them before they started implementing the projects.

"What hit us was the 'advanced negative information' against the projects," he said.

Van Tooren, for her part, said that "everything that (Comelec) must do should be transparent. It should be something that will hold up in the light of day."

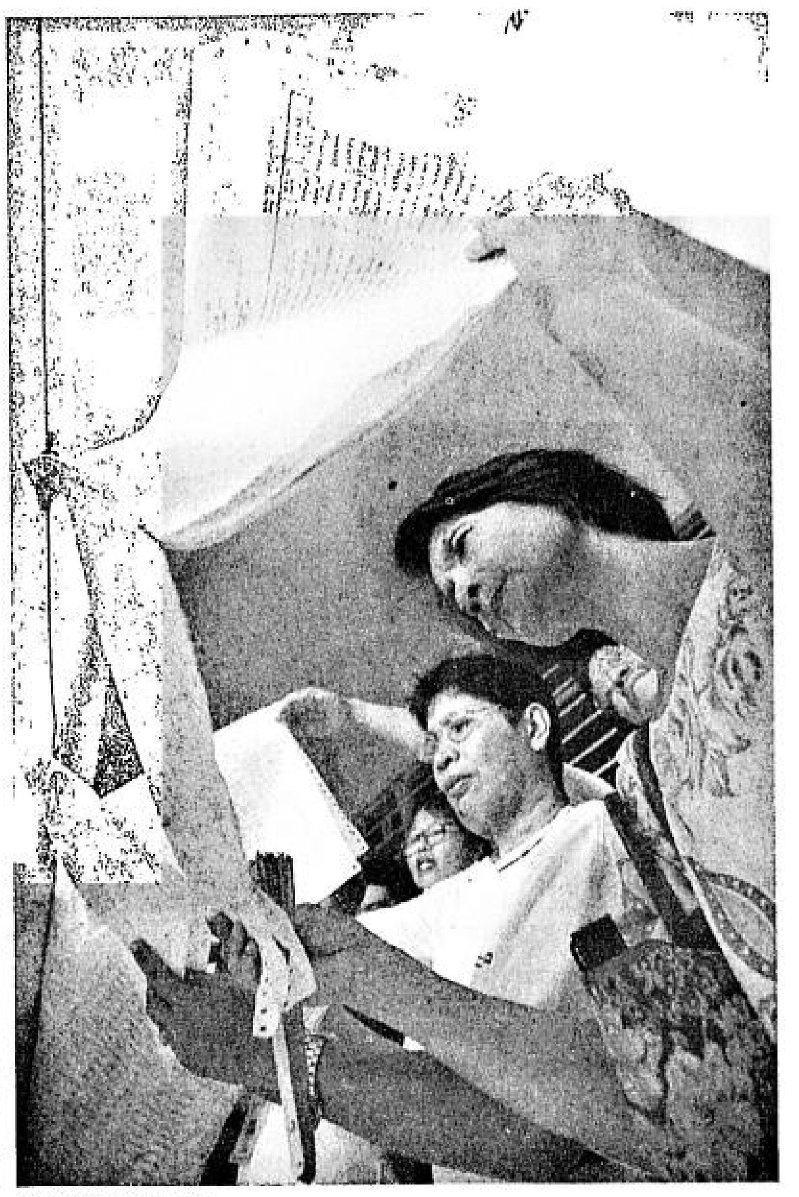
At the same time, she suggested that the Comelec should adopt a "change management" team that would evaluate the process of automating the Philippine elections.

"The concept of modernization is good. But usually it is in the implementation that we encounter hiccups," she said. "A modernization project is more than just technology."

"If they ask the (PCS) back to help them, I would make strong suggestions to really include change management before we get into the actual automation project," Van Tooren added.

One industry observer, however, said that the Comelec's failure to implement automated elections this year would likely discourage technology firms to participate in future projects.

The source said that unless the Comelec leadership revives its credibility, the country would expect another bumpy road to computerized elections in 2007.



VOTERS in Pedro Cruz Elementary School search for their names in the list of voters before casting their votes during the 2001 elections. Many voters complained that although they were registered voters in their precincts, their names were missing from the voters' list. This was one of the problems the Comelec wanted to address through automation.

'ILOVEYOU' virus . . .

From page B14

into double-clicking on a malicious attachment.

"Memorably in 2001, a worm which pretended to contain pictures of tennis player Anna Kournikova successfully spread around the globe. Other viruses have posed as files connected with Shakira, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton or Jennifer Lopez," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for United Kingdom-based Sophos.

Cluley said the ILOVEYOU virus "heralded a new era of e-mail-aware worms which have clogged up computer users' e-mail systems ever since."

He added: "The sad fact is that four years ago, users were probably just as likely to fall for a virus with a psychological trick up its sleeve as they were before. There are people who will launch the virus even if they have been hit many times before. Technology may have improved in the last four years, but people's gullibility remains the same."

Despite his destructive action, De Guzman was able to escape prosecution as the Philippines had no law against spreading computer viruses at that time.

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- to provide training, support & services to local customer base
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product info: www.ugsplm.com

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Whether you are at home, at the office, or on-the-move, electronics are your connection to the world. You surf the web from home, work extra hours, and often take your mobile office on the road, in the air, or overseas. Imagine what would happen if, all of a sudden, you were unable to perform the daily functions made so convenient by today's technology?

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Borra said that the Comelec automation projects failed because of bad public relations hitting them before they started implementing the projects.

"What hit us was the 'advanced negative information' against the projects," he said.

Van Tooren, for her part, said that "everything that (Comelec) must do should be transparent. It should be something that will hold up in the light of day."

At the same time, she suggested that the Comelec should adopt a "change management" team that would evaluate the process of automating the Philippine elections.

"The concept of modernization is good. But usually it is in the implementation that we encounter hiccups," she said. "A modernization project is more than just technology."

"If they ask the (PCS) back to help them, I would make strong suggestions to really include change management before we get into the actual automation project," Van Tooren added.

One industry observer, however, said that the Comelec's failure to implement automated elections this year would likely discourage technology firms to participate in future projects.

The source said that unless the Comelec leadership revives its credibility, the country would expect another bumpy road to computerized elections in 2007.

VOTERS in Pedro Cruz Elementary School search for their names in the list of voters before casting their votes during the 2001 elections. Many voters complained that although they were registered voters in their precincts, their names were missing from the voters' list. This was one of the problems the Comelec wanted to address through automation.

'ILOVEYOU' virus . . .

From page B14

into double-clicking on a malicious attachment.

"Memorably in 2001, a worm which pretended to contain pictures of tennis player Anna Kournikova successfully spread around the globe. Other viruses have posed as files connected with Shakira, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton or Jennifer Lopez," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for United Kingdom-based Sophos.

Cluley said the ILOVEYOU virus "heralded a new era of e-mail-aware worms which have clogged up computer users' e-mail systems ever since."

He added: "The sad fact is that four years ago, users were probably just as likely to fall for a virus with a psychological trick up its sleeve as they were before. There are people who will launch the virus even if they have been hit many times before. Technology may have improved in the last four years, but people's gullibility remains the same."

Despite his destructive action, De Guzman was able to escape prosecution as the Philippines had no law against spreading computer viruses at that time.

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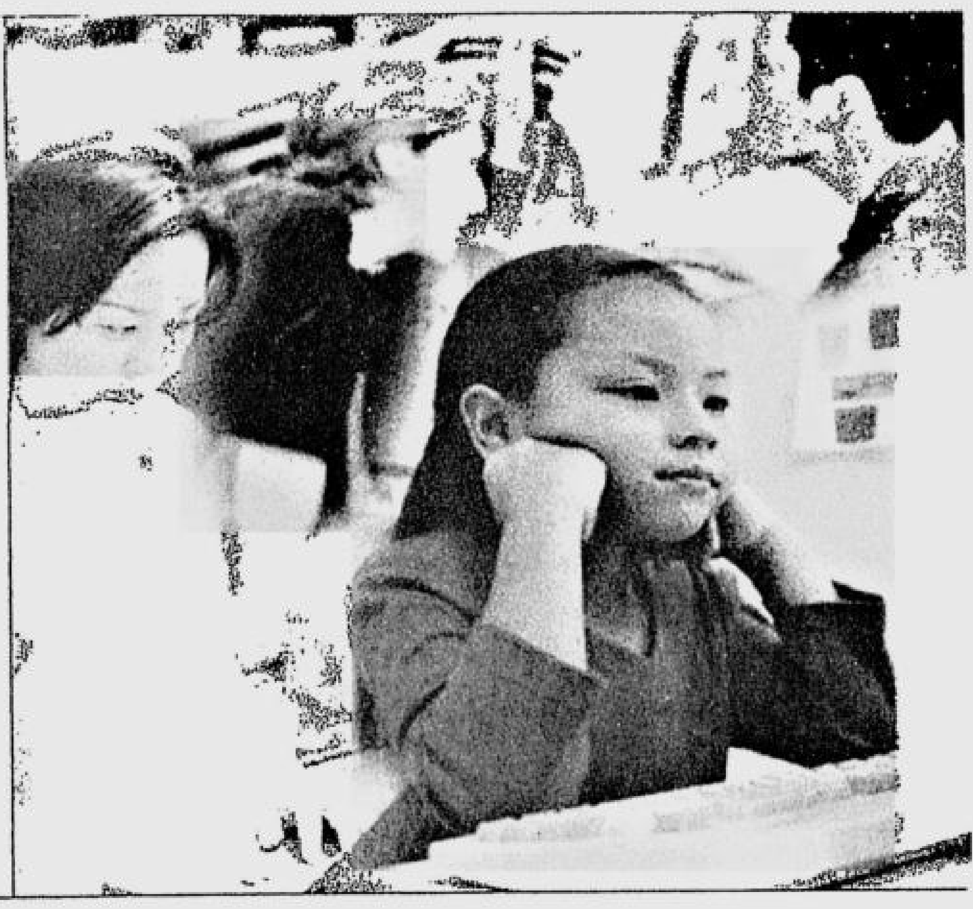

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Editor **Leo Magno**

The bumpy road to modern elections in the Philippines

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

SPECIAL REPORT

THE LONG queue on election day may disappear should the country automate the next polls.

MONDAY, May 10, 2004. You wake up early today not because it is the first day of work. You belong to the 43 million registered Filipino voters who will troop to about 300,000 polling places all over the country to vote for the next set of political leaders for the next six years.

But as you arrive at the polling center at 7 a.m., the familiar sight of people lining up outside a classroom to check their names in the computer printout of voters conspicuously taped near the door is noticeably absent.

Inside the classrooms, you're greeted by smiling public school teachers acting as the Board of Election Inspectors. You find your name in the voters' list, then you hand them a neatly laminated identification card. You're asked to sign and place your thumb mark on the pre-printed ballot and the voters' list.

You are then informed that the ballots already contain pre-printed names of all the political candidates running for specific positions this year. All you're asked to do now is shade over the oval-shaped space beside the name of the candidate you wish to vote.

In less than five minutes, you're done. One teacher seals the pre-printed ballot in an envelope, then you're asked again to affix your thumb mark on the now-sealed ballot, and drop it into a slim ballot box.

They then apply indelible ink on your index finger, leaving a mark that indicates you've already voted. You go home and wait for the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to declare some of the winning candidates for local positions in the next 24 hours.

At 3 p.m. the polling places are closed. All the ballot boxes are gathered and readied for counting at designated centers.

As the ballot boxes are sent to the provincial municipalities and city halls, each ballot box is opened in full view of everyone, then authorized poll technicians begin feeding the pre-printed ballots in especially designed computers, also known as automated counting machines, which almost look like a photocopier.

In a minute, one automated counting machine finishes 50 ballots. Counting for each precinct, which has an average of 400 voters, takes 10 minutes to finish.

Twenty-four hours after the polling period ends, the Comelec begins the proclamation of 50 percent of the winning candidates in the cities and municipalities all over the country. Within 24 hours, the poll body would already know the results of voting in 100 percent of the cities and municipalities.

Two days later, the Comelec would begin proclaiming winners in the cities and municipalities, then winners of the provincial posts three days later. Finally winners of the national positions would be declared in less than a week.

The next week, the country's new President, Vice President, senators and the rest of the local leaders would be sworn in, ending the country's successful attempt to automate elections.

Now, what's wrong with this picture? Snap out of it and wake up to reality.

Sadly, the scenario depicted above is just a tale of what could have happened if the Philippines, through the Comelec, decided to implement the automated elections this year.

The real story is that the road to the modernization of the Philippine elections has been paved with controversy after another controversy.

Suspicions of a rigged bidding of one of the Comelec's computerization projects forced the Supreme Court to void the poll body's attempt to automate the counting and canvassing of votes. This forced the Comelec to revert to manual elections and canvassing, a process which historically has been marred by rampant and wide-scale cheating and fraud.

The winning bidder of the Comelec automation project, Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc.—a consortium of several local and foreign firms—last year won the P1.3 billion bid to automate the counting of canvassing of votes for the May 2004 elections.

The project was labeled Phase Two of the Comelec's three-phase modernization program.

Phase One dealt with the registration and validation of voters. Phase Two involved the development of a system to automate counting and canvassing of votes. Phase Three entailed the use of satellite technology for electronic transmission of election results from far-flung areas to the poll body's headquarters back in Manila.

The Comelec's modernization plan had a total budget of P3 billion.

However, months into the preparations of Phase Two, the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines (ITFP), a local group of IT firms and government executives, filed a petition with the Supreme Court, asking the high tribunal to take a

THE BUMPY/B13

'ILOVEYOU' virus four years later

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

ANTIVIRUS experts tag the "ILOVEYOU" virus, also known as the "Love Bug," as the grandfather of the "modern e-mail aware viruses" similar to SoBig, myDoom and Netsky.

Created by Filipino student Onel de Guzman, the ILOVEYOU virus brought notoriety to the young and ambitious Filipino computer programmer four years ago.

On May 4, 2000, De Guzman launched one of the most destructive Internet viruses, allegedly not knowing that it would create much havoc.

In a few hours, the virus spread quickly, eventually infecting millions of computers worldwide, as most people were fooled into believing that they were receiving an e-mailed love letter from someone they knew.

Time Magazine back then tagged the ILOVEYOU virus as a successful "social engineering" method, which most hackers use to dupe their victims into volunteering information.

The ILOVEYOU virus used known techniques, wherein malicious codes are hidden in e-mail attachments.

Once the attached file was opened, the virus would forward itself to random e-mail addresses found on the infected computer.

Since the appearance of the Love Bug, anti-virus firm Sophos said many other viruses using the social engineering tricks of the Love Bug have emerged and have used similar tricks to tempt users

ILOVEYOU/B13

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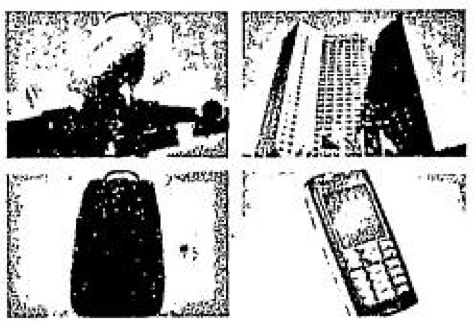

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The perils of enormous campaign spending

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

"IF YOU are not rich—or do not have a rich patron—you cannot get elected in the Philippines," says Joel Rocamora, executive director of the Institute for Popular Democracy.

That's clear as day. Candidates spend millions to get nominated, to buy air time, to travel and meet the voters, to hold rallies, and to get their votes counted.

In 2001, senators reported they spent an average of P27.5 million for their campaigns. The top spender officially forked over P49 million.

P5-billion kitty

But the figures are certainly understated. According to Reli German, an old hand in election campaigns, a person running for national office should have at least P5 billion in the war chest. A large fraction of this goes to TV commercials. No other medium can compete with television in terms of imprinting name recall.

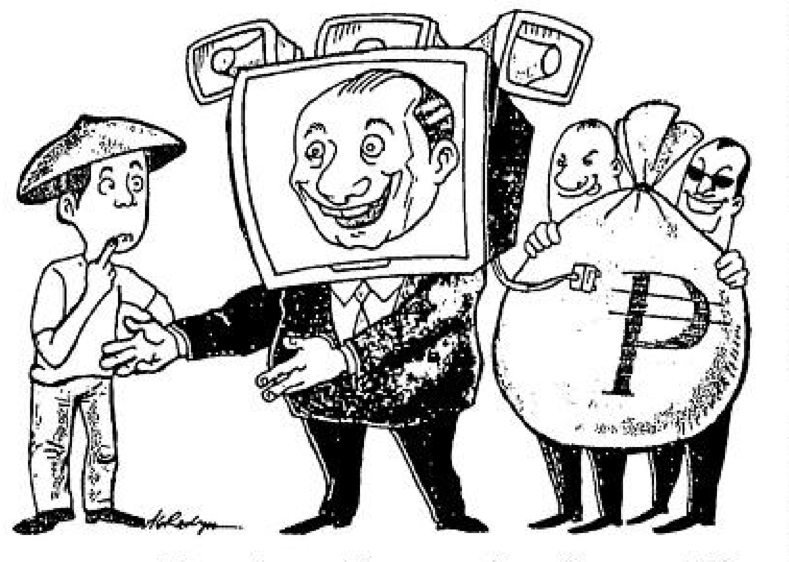
A 30-second political ad in ABS-CBN or GMA 7 costs P150,000—and that does not include the tab for producing it. Because such TV ads are geared toward name recall, they have to be played many times.

These immense costs make it hard for the poor to be truly represented in the halls of power. Congress persons are almost always multi-millionaires.

How rich are these politicians? The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) looked into the wealth of the legislators. In 2001 the average net worth of a congressman was P28 million. That of a senator was P59 million. A fourth of all senators had a net worth of more than P100 million.

Favoring the richest families

The immense campaign costs can skew laws to favor the richest families. The candidates raise money from their allies, but they are expected to return the favor once they come to power. Laws passed should not violate the interests of these elite. Those in power grant their cronies special business contracts.



Then there is the danger of corruption. Shady politicians in turn get a cut in the deals—that is their way of recovering their campaign costs. Money can come from illegal sources, like gambling lords or those who rule the drug trade.

Hence, the steep cost of running for office chokes the voice of the poor. It distorts the rules of the game to favor a few super-rich families. And it opens a playground of opportunities for corruption.

Keeping a lid on donations

Can't campaign donations be controlled? The nation does not lack in the pertinent laws. Republic Act No. 7166 spells out the rules for election spending.

In 2001, the candidates for president and vice president could spend only P10 for every registered voter. The political party of these candidates could add a counterpart of P5 per voter. As for candidates for the Senate, the limit was P3 per voter, plus P5 from the political party.

In 2001 there were 36 million registered voters. That put the official spending limit at P108 million per senator. Those prices were realistic only for elections held a decade ago.

Within 30 days after the election, each candidate must submit an itemized statement of all campaign contributions and expenses. The statement must bear details like amounts, dates, and the full names and addresses of the donors.

Then came Republic Act No. 9006, the Fair Election Practices Law. It removed the ban on political advertising. But candidates and parties had to submit their contracts with the media. Comelec was allowed to run spot checks on TV and radio stations and newspapers and could verify if the candidates obeyed the law on election spending.

What would happen to candidates who did not submit their statements? They had to pay a fine ranging from P1,000 to P30,000.

The range makes one wonder.

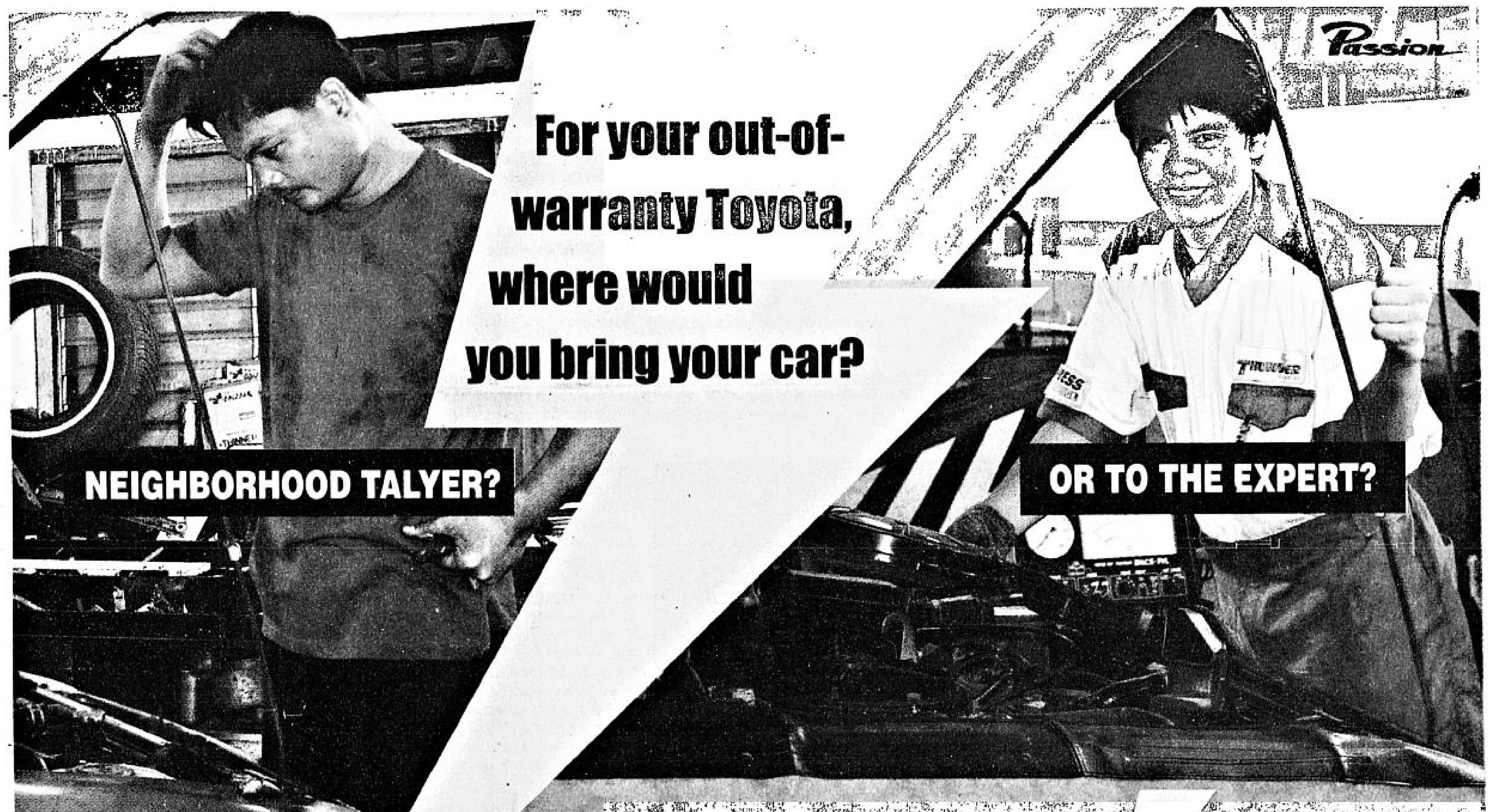
After having spent millions of pesos, would a politician lose sleep over a P30,000 fine?

Understated accounts

In 1992 Comelec looked into the said statements. Commissioner Resurrecion Borja was quoted in 2001 as saying, "Based on the 1992 findings, it's very strange, because almost all the candidates appeared to be law-abiding citizens in terms of filing their statements of contributions and expenditures. They did not overspend because they simply understated their figures."

The problem is, Comelec does not have the teeth to examine the statements. The Omnibus Election Code does not specify a mechanism for verifying the data. Comelec lacks an ample supply of lawyers and accountants to go

THE PERILS/ B2-2



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Hardy tourism industry boosts Egypt's economy

CAIRO—The alleys of Cairo's Khan el-Khalili bazaar are even more cramped than usual, thanks to a tourism boom that has persuaded economists to revise upwards their forecasts for growth in the sluggish Egyptian economy.

The purveyors of papyrus and plastic pyramids are cashing in on the bonanza, filling order books for the hundreds of tiny workshops in the back streets of the old city.

"Germans like to buy mother-of-pearl boxes, Japanese like to buy perfume bottles, Italians like buying copper plates and the Americans buy everything," said shopkeeper Adel Mogawari.

In the shadow of a medieval Cairo minaret, souvenir maker and merchant Abou Taleb says his sales are rising by seven or eight percent each month. He has taken on more staff over the past year to meet the rising demand.

Egypt's tourist industry, the country's largest private sector employer, shrugged off the start of war in Iraq in 2003 to notch up a record 6.04 million visitors.

Even if tourism alone is not enough to drive the economic growth needed to absorb a growing pool of young Egyptian jobless, economists say the visitors are making a difference.

The sector is also forecast to earn more hard currency for Egypt, where the pound has lost more than one quarter of its value against the dollar since January 2003.

The weakness of the pound is one of the main factors drawing tourists away from competing resorts in Greece and Turkey to the Pyramids and the Red Sea reefs, said Yara Salib, marketing and public relations director at Egyptian tour operator Travco.

James Murray, on holiday from Germany, said relative proximity to home and guaranteed sunshine had drawn him to the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

"It's definitely better value for money than the Canary Islands or some place like that," he said after a snorkeling trip to the coral reefs, which divers consider some of the best in the world.

Egyptian tourism suffered from the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting next door in 2000 and the September 2001 attacks on the United States, blamed on Arab hijackers. But it has bounced back quickly from another dip caused by the start of the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

"Egyptian tourism is remarkably resilient, all things considered," said Daniel Hanna, regional analyst for Standard Chartered in Dubai.

The industry was dealt a serious blow in 1997 when Islamic militants massacred 58 foreign tourists in Luxor's Valley of the Kings, where British archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed the tomb of boy-king Tutankhamun in 1923. *Reuters*

It's gold that glitters in Kyrgyz economy

KUMTOR, Kyrgyzstan—Kumtor Operating Co. may not be among the world's largest gold producers. But when it sneezes, Kyrgyzstan's moribund economy catches the flu.

Believe it or not, the Central Asian state's joint venture with Canada's Cameco Corp. employs just 1,650 people, but it alone accounts for 10 to 14 percent of gross domestic product in a country of five million.

"There are few countries in the world that report their GDP with or without a company," said Kumtor president Andrew Lewis.

"There was an expression when I first arrived: 'When Kumtor has a bad month, the country has a bad month.' I believe that's still very valid. We are the largest foreign direct investor."

Kyrgyzstan's GDP of $2 billion is now roughly half the size of its 1991 peak level and is dominated by agriculture.

The once heavily subsidized economy, recovering from a coma after most industries died along with the demise of the Soviet Union, did not grow in 2002 when accident-stricken Kumtor cut its output by 30 percent.

In 2003 GDP rebounded by 6.7 percent but without Kumtor, it would have risen just 4.9 percent.

Kumtor, in operation since 1997, produced 677,552 ounces of gold in 2003, up from 528,550 ounces in 2002 when its open-pit mine was hit by a huge rock slide.

"In 2003 we were back into a normal operating mode," Lewis said. "As we get deeper into the mine, the grade of the ore is decreasing. We will see the gold output reducing this year to just over 600,000 ounces and next year to 500,000 ounces." Cameco, the world's leading uranium supplier, originally invested $452 million of its own and borrowed funds in Kumtor, one of the world's 10 largest gold fields. Cameco has 33 percent and Kyrgyzstan 67 percent in the nation's flagship venture.

Kumtor's total gold reserves are estimated at 300 tons. To date, the mine has produced over 140 tons of gold.

John Kazakoff, Kumtor senior vice president in charge of operations, said the field's ore was "refractory" and forecast an average gold content of some four grams per ton for 2004. *Reuters*

The perils of enormous campaign spending

From page B2-1

through the stacks of folders. The few lawyers in the staff are already overburdened with a backlog of cases.

Haydee Yorac, a former Comelec chair, has said that no one has been convicted of presenting false statements. There is "no way" that Comelec could examine the reports.

Investigative work needed

This is where civil society can come in. Anti-corruption groups can scrutinize each candidate's statements. They can compare the politicians' files with the accounts of the media outfits. They can verify the job orders from the printing press firms. Through their investigations, they can begin to put some sanity into the circus that is Philippine poll spending.

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The key to our progress

MAPPING THE FUTURE

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WHOEVER wins in this election faces the challenge of using the key to our nation's progress well. That key is partnership.

It is partnership, with broad-based participation, that can lead us to progress. It involves partnership between the public and private sectors and between members of each sector at all levels—national, regional and local.

Let us look at how partnership is now being tried to achieve progress in one important aspect of our development—in the environment area..

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) applies much of its resources on environmental regulation; resources that are better spent on more development-oriented activities, such as ecosystems research. Such activities could lead to more environmentally sound use of our natural resources.

However, the DENR has to implement laws that aim to protect the environment. Cleaning our air, ensuring safe water for all, reducing waste, and other environmental challenges confront the DENR, as well as the rest of us, daily. However, with dwindling resources versus increasing challenges, the DENR's traditional regulatory strategy can no longer work. Even with the best intentions, the DENR's few environmental inspectors cannot monitor well enough the environmental performance of thousands of companies.

With limited resources, how can the DENR succeed in protecting our environment? Modify the strategy. This is precisely what the DENR has started to do through the DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-14. This DAO (see www.denr.gov.ph/policy) has created the Philippine Environmental Partnership Program (PEPP), a program based on a strategy to support industry self-regulation toward improved environmental performance.

Part of this new environmental strategy is a set of incentives and package of assistance that companies, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), can avail of in order that they can practice pollution prevention and self-regulation.

In implementing the PEPP, the DENR, through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), is also giving the business community the chance to draft the PEPP procedural manual, which shall explain how the PEPP will work.

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), spearheaded by its environment committee and with assistance from the US-Asia Environmental Partnership, is coordinating the preparation of the draft procedural manual.

Since the PEPP DAO was issued in 2003, the DENR wants to issue the manual soon. Despite the limited time for drafting it, the MAP is seeking participation in the private sector in this important work. So far, with the help of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce, Mindanao Business Council, Philippine Business for the Environment and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the EMB offices in Manila, Cebu and Davao, we successfully held consultations involving business and industry associations, professional associations and some nongovernmental organizations. The media in Davao supported us well with their print and broadcast coverage to reach out to stakeholders in this partnership program in Mindanao. We have also sought inputs for the manual from a multi-sectoral group convened last week by the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development.

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We can cite more initiatives that some companies are already undertaking and may now be hopefully expanded. The poor state of our environment demands more positive actions from business, as well as from other sectors of our society. Improving the quality of our environment is one of our country's priorities requiring partnership.

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'Not the usual yada yada'

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"If they continue to have snafus like Gmail and ignore public responsibility and get bad press, then the stock won't go up," Brandt said.

Gmail, still in test phase, offers one free gigabyte of storage, far more than rival e-mail services. *Reuters*

Hardy tourism industry boosts Egypt's economy

CAIRO—The alleys of Cairo's Khan el-Khalili bazaar are even more cramped than usual, thanks to a tourism boom that has persuaded economists to revise upwards their forecasts for growth in the sluggish Egyptian economy.

The purveyors of papyrus and plastic pyramids are cashing in on the bonanza, filling order books for the hundreds of tiny workshops in the back streets of the old city.

"Germans like to buy mother-of-pearl boxes, Japanese like to buy perfume bottles, Italians like buying copper plates and the Americans buy everything," said shopkeeper Adel Mogawari.

In the shadow of a medieval Cairo minaret, souvenir maker and merchant Abou Taleb says his sales are rising by seven or eight percent each month. He has taken on more staff over the past year to meet the rising demand.

Egypt's tourist industry, the country's largest private sector employer, shrugged off the start of war in Iraq in 2003 to notch up a record 6.04 million visitors.

Even if tourism alone is not enough to drive the economic growth needed to absorb a growing pool of young Egyptian jobless, economists say the visitors are making a difference.

The sector is also forecast to earn more hard currency for Egypt, where the pound has lost more than one quarter of its value against the dollar since January 2003.

The weakness of the pound is one of the main factors drawing tourists away from competing resorts in Greece and Turkey to the Pyramids and the Red Sea reefs, said Yara Salib, marketing and public relations director at Egyptian tour operator Travco.

James Murray, on holiday from Germany, said relative proximity to home and guaranteed sunshine had drawn him to the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

"It's definitely better value for money than the Canary Islands or some place like that," he said after a snorkeling trip to the coral reefs, which divers consider some of the best in the world.

Egyptian tourism suffered from the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting next door in 2000 and the September 2001 attacks on the United States, blamed on Arab hijackers. But it has bounced back quickly from another dip caused by the start of the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

"Egyptian tourism is remarkably resilient, all things considered," said Daniel Hanna, regional analyst for Standard Chartered in Dubai.

The industry was dealt a serious blow in 1997 when Islamic militants massacred 58 foreign tourists in Luxor's Valley of the Kings, where British archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed the tomb of boy-king Tutankhamun in 1923. *Reuters*

It's gold that glitters in Kyrgyz economy

KUMTOR, Kyrgyzstan—Kumtor Operating Co. may not be among the world's largest gold producers. But when it sneezes, Kyrgyzstan's moribund economy catches the flu.

Believe it or not, the Central Asian state's joint venture with Canada's Cameco Corp. employs just 1,650 people, but it alone accounts for 10 to 14 percent of gross domestic product in a country of five million.

"There are few countries in the world that report their GDP with or without a company," said Kumtor president Andrew Lewis.

"There was an expression when I first arrived: 'When Kumtor has a bad month, the country has a bad month.' I believe that's still very valid. We are the largest foreign direct investor."

Kyrgyzstan's GDP of $2 billion is now roughly half the size of its 1991 peak level and is dominated by agriculture.

The once heavily subsidized economy, recovering from a coma after most industries died along with the demise of the Soviet Union, did not grow in 2002 when accident-stricken Kumtor cut its output by 30 percent.

In 2003 GDP rebounded by 6.7 percent but without Kumtor, it would have risen just 4.9 percent.

Kumtor, in operation since 1997, produced 677,552 ounces of gold in 2003, up from 528,550 ounces in 2002 when its open-pit mine was hit by a huge rock slide.

"In 2003 we were back into a normal operating mode," Lewis said. "As we get deeper into the mine, the grade of the ore is decreasing. We will see the gold output reducing this year to just over 600,000 ounces and next year to 500,000 ounces." Cameco, the world's leading uranium supplier, originally invested $452 million of its own and borrowed funds in Kumtor, one of the world's 10 largest gold fields. Cameco has 33 percent and Kyrgyzstan 67 percent in the nation's flagship venture.

Kumtor's total gold reserves are estimated at 300 tons. To date, the mine has produced over 140 tons of gold.

John Kazakoff, Kumtor senior vice president in charge of operations, said the field's ore was "refractory" and forecast an average gold content of some four grams per ton for 2004. *Reuters*

The perils of enormous campaign spending

From page B2-1

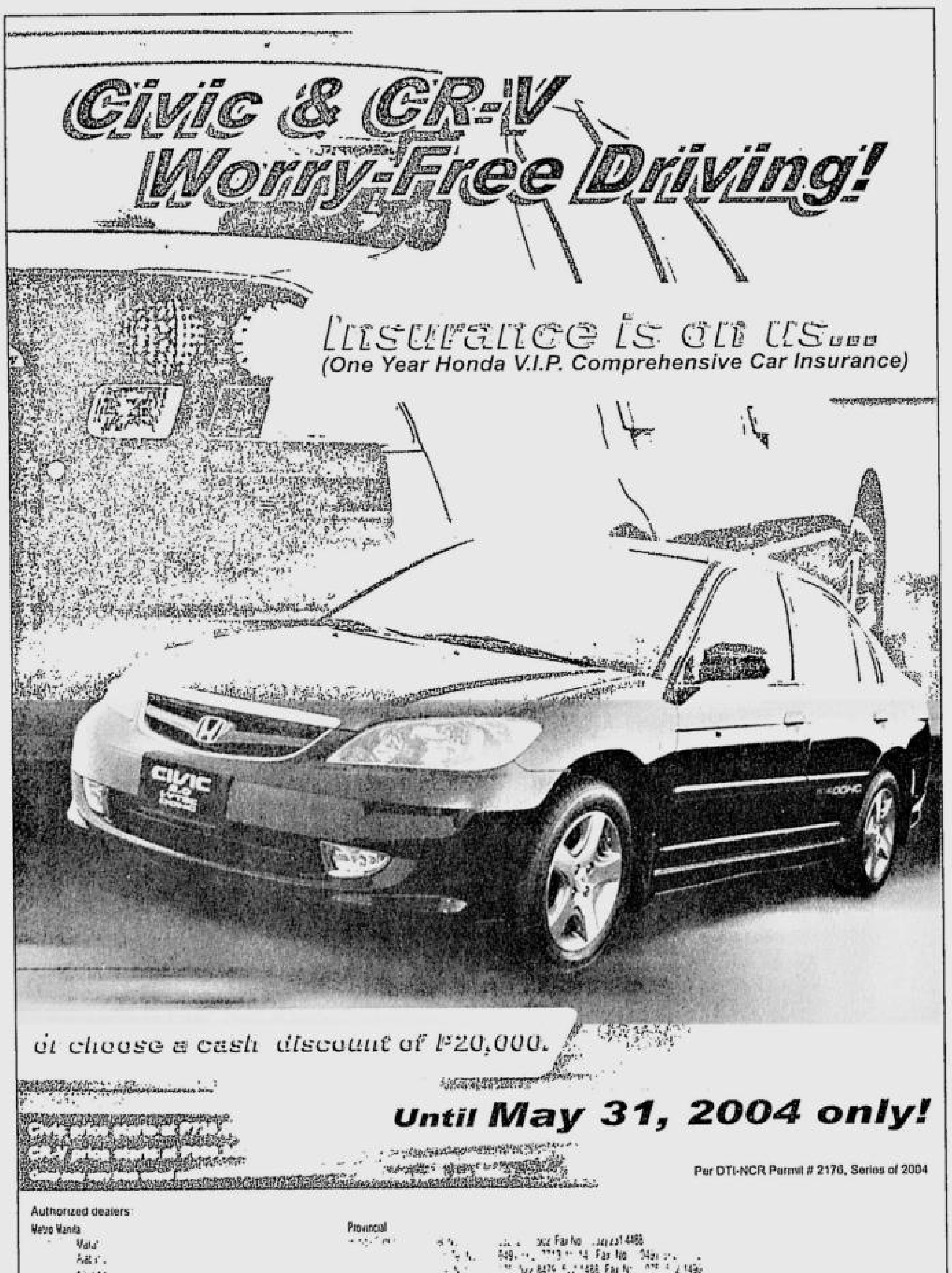
through the stacks of folders. The few lawyers in the staff are already overburdened with a backlog of cases.

Haydee Yorac, a former Comelec chair, has said that no one has been convicted of presenting false statements. There is "no way" that Comelec could examine the reports.

Investigative work needed

This is where civil society can come in. Anti-corruption groups can scrutinize each candidate's statements. They can compare the politicians' files with the accounts of the media outfits. They can verify the job orders from the printing press firms. Through their investigations, they can begin to put some sanity into the circus that is Philippine poll spending.

Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com>



The key to our progress

MAPping THE FUTURE

Corazon PB. Claudio

WHOEVER wins in this election faces the challenge of using the key to our nation's progress well. That key is partnership.

It is partnership, with broad-based participation, that can lead us to progress. It involves partnership between the public and private sectors and between members of each sector at all levels—national, regional and local.

Let us look at how partnership is now being tried to achieve progress in one important aspect of our development—in the environment area.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) applies much of its resources on environmental regulation; resources that are better spent on more development-oriented activities, such as ecosystems research. Such activities could lead to more environmentally sound use of our natural resources.

However, the DENR has to implement laws that aim to protect the environment. Cleaning our air, ensuring safe water for all, reducing waste, and other environmental challenges confront the DENR, as well as the rest of us, daily. However, with dwindling resources versus increasing challenges, the DENR's traditional regulatory strategy can no longer work. Even with the best intentions, the DENR's few environmental inspectors cannot monitor well enough the environmental performance of thousands of companies.

With limited resources, how can the DENR succeed in protecting our environment? Modify the strategy. This is precisely what the DENR has started to do through the DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-14. This DAO (see www.denr.gov.ph/policy) has created the Philippine Environmental Partnership Program (PEPP), a program based on a strategy to support industry self-regulation toward improved environmental performance.

Part of this new environmental strategy is a set of incentives and package of assistance that companies, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), can avail of in order that they can practice pollution prevention and self-regulation.

In implementing the PEPP, the DENR, through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), is also giving the business community the chance to draft the PEPP procedural manual, which shall explain how the PEPP will work.

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Surprise party guidelines

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: My officemates and I are planning a surprise party for our boss. He will be turning 60 and we wanted to give him a nice surprise party from all of us at the office. We are 50 all in all, we are not that big a company. Would you please give me some guidelines on this?

A: The first step is to decide on a date. Make sure his secretary blocks off the date. She has to block it off in such a way that he honors the scheduled appointment and not decide to cancel out at the last minute.

If you are planning to schedule the party on the actual day of his birthday, the chances of him canceling a pre-scheduled meeting will be high, as such, you m
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boss will actually be p
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Third is to assign teams to be in charge of décor and food. You can be as festive or as serious as you want, but since you are giving a surprise party it might be a good idea to decorate the place to make it look like there is a party going on. Balloons and other decora-

NY-Manila partnership creates house of design

WHEN Don Dia and Gisela Santos began running a small graphic design outfit called Bluecover in Manila in early 2003, all they had were a couple of computers placed on the floor.

Bluecover has grown from an upstart two-person partnership, into a graphic design company with clients in the who's who of Philippine business.

the phone. "We learned about the nuances of the market and the business of communications just by having a gung-ho attitude and doing what had to be done," muses Don. "Thankfully, we were able to plunk in a respectable P5 million in revenue in 2003, barely 10 months into our first year," he says.

tually worked wonders for the company. While it was exhausting, the interchange also made both Gisela and Don's professional relationship richer.

"We always work from a standpoint where we had to make good with our promise to client, Don says. He admits to the lengthy debates, but says that these little squabbles make
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nist, Don
now, I've
ur slogan
oy Roque

FIRST Life president
Bayani 2004 and First

BACON CHEESEBURGER SUPREME
It's back!
A juicy 100% pure beef patty, hot-off-the-grill, with a slice of cheese, strips of crispy bacon and hearty sauteed onions.
You gotta have one!
Great with fries and an ice-cold Coca-Cola
Coca-Cola
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Hono

and persistence

FIRST Guarantee Life Assurance Co. Inc. (First Life) recently held "An Evening of Glory and Glamour," the company's annual awards night at the Manila Polo Club. The event honored the awardees of Gawad Kagitingan, a citation launched in 1993 to recognize the company's top life underwriters in terms of productivity and persistency of business, and the winners of the "1st Life Cup 2004" invitational golf tournament.

First Life also gave out various awards and distinctions to its top underwriters that included the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) qualification, International Quality Award (IQA), and the company's Activity Club and Service achievements.

Deputy Insurance Commissioner Vida Chiong graced the event and delivered the keynote address. First Life president and CEO Peter Coyiuto presented the awards and praised the agents' hard work, courage and compassion which helped Filipino families realize their financial goals through life insurance. The executive also pounded on the impact a local company has in servicing the savings of the Filipino people.

First Life says it contributes to local economic development as it plows back 100 percent of its income to investments in the country.

The event brought together 300 of First Life's policyholders and friends.

Sponsors included Washington Watches, Business World and Prudential Guarantee and with the patronage of valued clients and friends like Asiatrust, Canon, Furn Italia, G&W Architects, Intellicare, PBCom, RCG Information Technology, Aristocrat Interiors, Bank of Commerce Canyon Woods, Cencorp Travel and Tours, Ricardo Enriquez, Icon Interiors, Nissan UN Avenue, Planters Bank, Schering Philippines Corp. and Tradetek Resources Inc.

Customers choose best shop staff

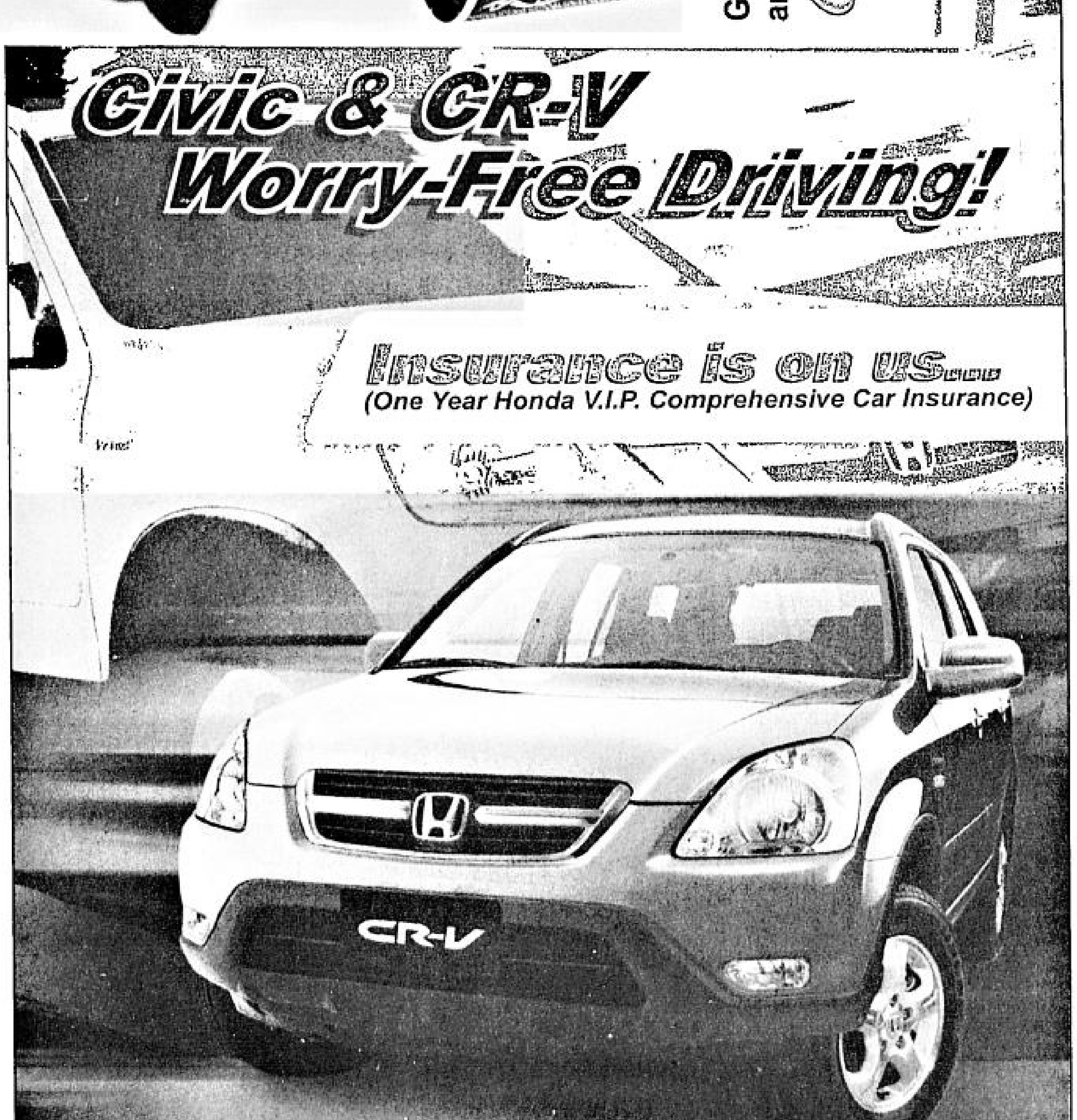
AS part of its 8th anniversary celebration last year, Healthy Options announced the first-ever search for "Customer Assistant of the Year." During the three-month search period, Healthy Options regular customers voted for their chosen candidate by filling out customer ballots and dropping it in the ballot box provided at each store. The winning nominee was awarded an all-expense paid trip for two to Hong Kong.

Like what Healthy Options managing director, Romy Sia said, this search is to recognize the effort and dedication of customer assistants that lead to the success of Asia's No. 1 health store, Healthy Options. This search holds the mission to produce quality customer service provided for regular clients' convenience. And that is why the customers are the ones that decide to whom the award should go.

After meticulous judgment by customers, Mae David luckily got the coveted prize and will be spending an all-expense-paid grand vacation in Hong Kong with her husband. Out of a number of deserving customer assistants from 10 branches, Mae was selected for being efficient and effective in helping out customers and convincing people to make health a top priority.

ROMY Sia with Mae David

Healthy Options continues its good service in various branches located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati; Level 2 of Festival Supermall, Filinvest; Alabang; Ground Level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; Ground floor of SM City North Edsa; Level 2 of SM Manila, SM Bicutan and SM Pampanga; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; Level 2 of SM Megamall B, Edsa Mandaluyong City. For more information, visit their website at www.healthyoptions.com.ph.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Honda Cars Mandaue Tel. No. (032) 422 3700 Fax No. (032) 422 3600

HONDA
www.hondaphil.com

RP elections; China, EU and US interest rates

By Rico Hizon
Contributor

TODAY, the Philippines' economic future falls on the shoulders of 43 million Filipinos, trooping to polling stations around the country.

Voters will decide which candidate or political party has the superior platform that would create more jobs, attract new foreign investments, and pursue further economic reforms for the country.

They will also have to decide which candidate could lead the country in the new global marketplace. And how to deal with external events such as a slowdown of the Chinese economy, the expansion of the European Union and an imminent hike in US borrowing costs.

I spoke with two leading economists Ong Sin Beng, JP Morgan Chase's Southeast Asia Economist and P-K Basu, managing director of Robust Economic Analysis and they shared with me their views on how these events will impact the Philippines going forward.

Q: The elections are here and in about 30 days, the country will have a new head of state for the next six years. What should be the priorities of the president in his or her first 100 days in office?

Sin Beng: The main challenge is to fix the country's fiscal deficit. Resolve issues at the Bureau of Internal Revenue in terms of tax collection.

Further raise the so-called sin taxes (beer and cigarettes) to fund the fiscal gap. Attract new foreign direct investment, which plunged 82 percent to $320 million last year and create more jobs to reduce the jobless rate which is one of the highest in Asia at 11 percent.

Basu: If President Macapagal retains the presidency, she needs to focus on fiscal consolidation in her first 100 days—and especially on making renewed progress on the privatization of Napocor (selling its Transco by September, and beginning the process of selling the generation assets).

While, the key challenge facing the prospective President Poe would be to regain the confidence of markets. He will need to put in place a strong team of technocrats, and reassure the markets that his rhetoric regarding debt-rescheduling is firmly behind him and will not be raised again.

Q: What would you recommend in terms of investment strategy if President Macapagal remains in power?

Sin Beng: Markets could rally in the short-term but in the longer-term you have to watch the policy walk and not the talk. In this regard, the risk is that things will continue its slow but steady deterioration.

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(The author anchors BBC World's Asia Business Report every weekday mornings, Feedback at rico.hizon@bbc.co.uk)

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Local estate agents say land prices in the hills between Seoul and the DMZ, 50 km away, have jumped 15 percent since 2001, when then South Korean president Kim Dae-jung held a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

That's less than the entire country, which in the last year alone—a year when North Korea's suspected nuclear program has provoked international alarm—has seen property values jump 20 percent, spurred by plans to build new towns to alleviate congestion in Seoul.

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The easing of tensions across the DMZ, the most heavily armed frontier in the world, is attracting foreign investors to South Korea.

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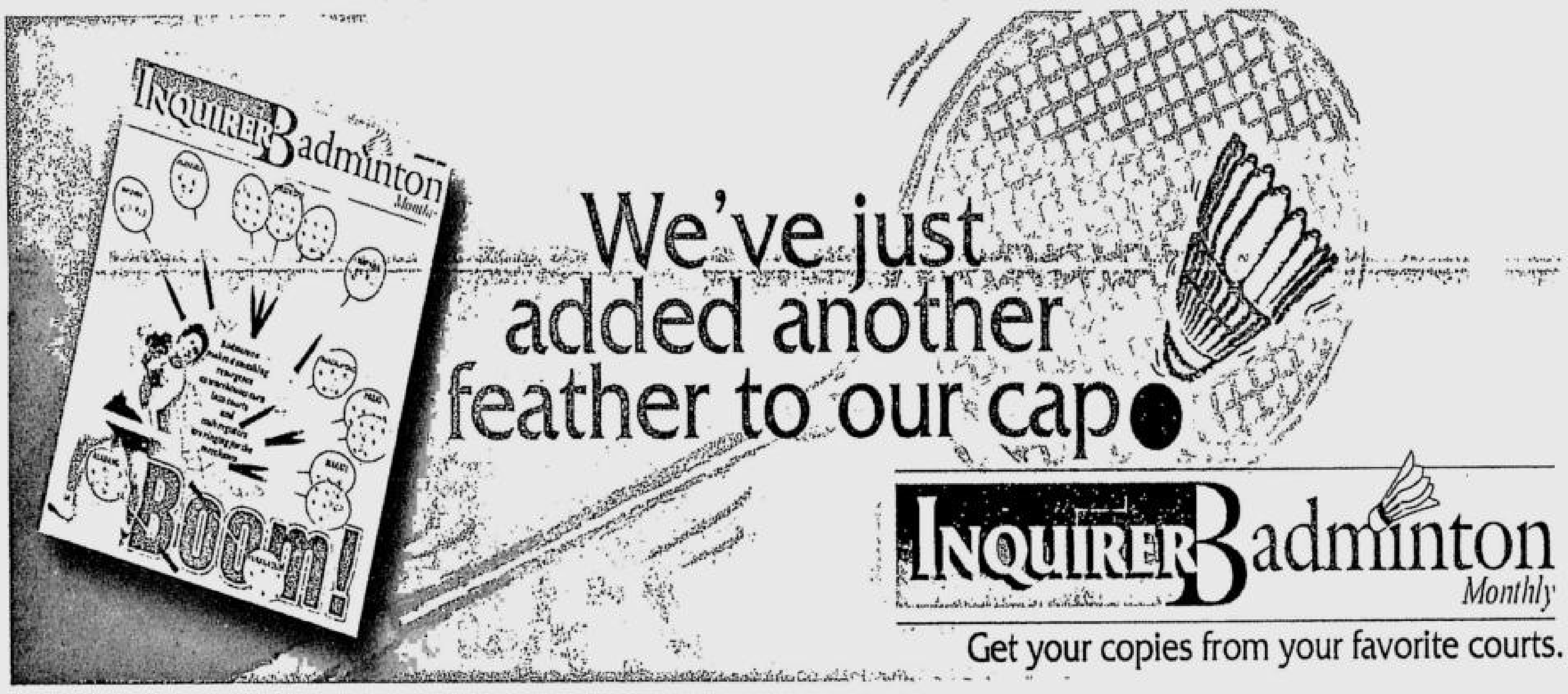
Reuters



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BUSINESS Monday

RP elections; China, EU and US interest rates

By Rico Hizon
Contributor

TODAY, the Philippines' economic future falls on the shoulders of 43 million Filipinos, trooping to polling stations around the country.

Voters will decide which candidate or political party has the superior platform that would create more jobs, attract new foreign investments, and pursue further economic reforms for the country.

They will also have to decide which candidate could lead the country in the new global marketplace. And how to deal with external events such as a slowdown of the Chinese economy, the expansion of the European Union and an imminent hike in US borrowing costs.

I spoke with two leading economists Ong Sin Beng, JP Morgan Chase's Southeast Asia Economist and P-K Basu, managing director of Robust Economic Analysis and they shared with me their views on how these events will impact the Philippines going forward.

Q: The elections are here and in about 30 days, the country will have a new head of state for the next six years. What should be the priorities of the president in his or her first 100 days in office?

Sin Beng: The main challenge is to fix the country's fiscal deficit. Resolve issues at the Bureau of Internal Revenue in terms of tax collection.

Further raise the so-called sin taxes (beer and cigarettes) to fund the fiscal gap. Attract new foreign direct investment, which plunged 82 percent to $320 million last year and create more jobs to reduce the jobless rate which is one of the highest in Asia at 11 percent.

Basu: If President Macapagal retains the presidency, she needs to focus on fiscal consolidation in her first 100 days—and especially on making renewed progress on the privatization of Napocor (selling its Transco by September, and beginning the process of selling the generation assets).

While, the key challenge facing the prospective President Poe would be to regain the confidence of markets. He will need to put in place a strong team of technocrats, and reassure the markets that his rhetoric regarding debt-rescheduling is firmly behind him and will not be raised again.

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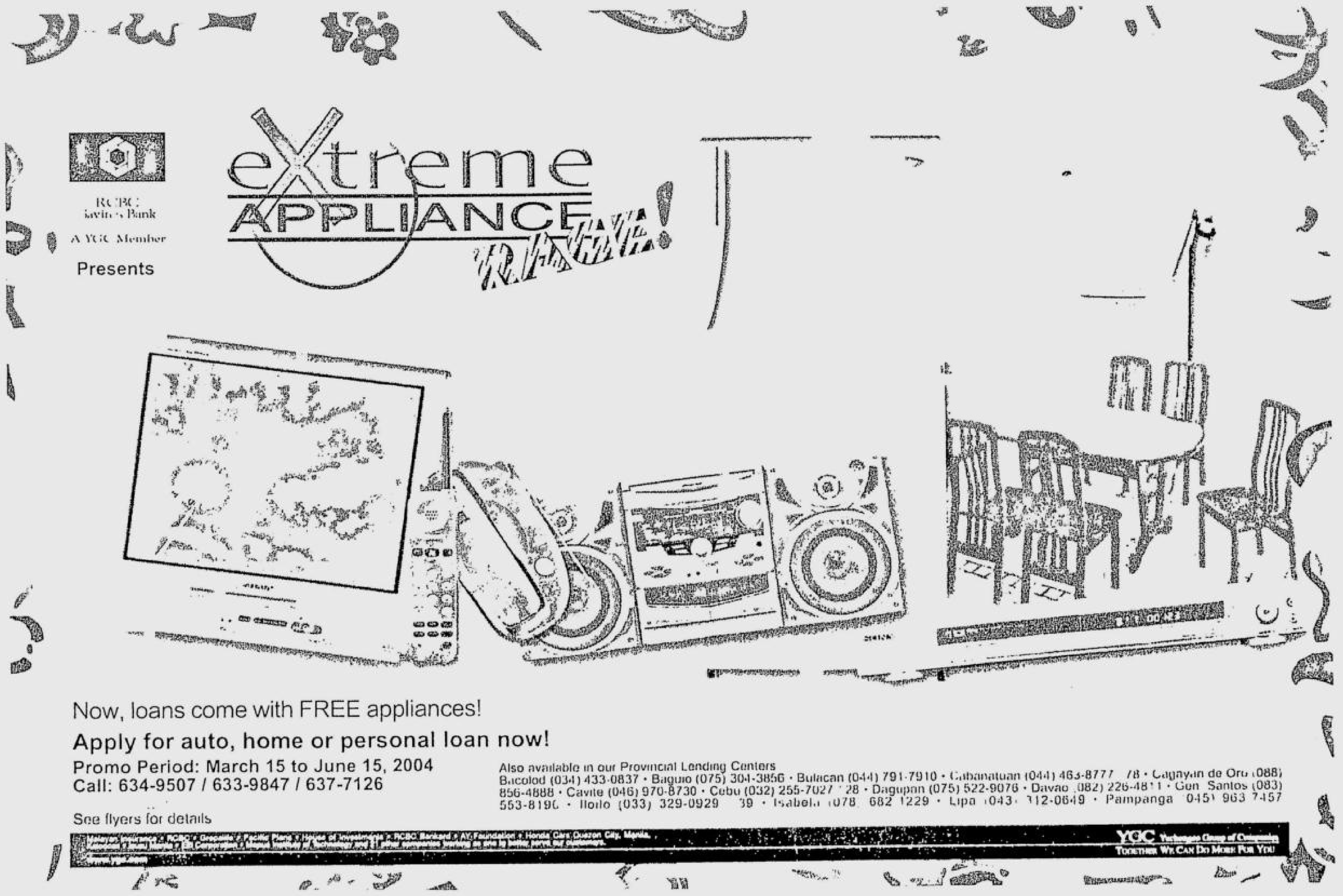
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Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Kris, Mark meant for each other, says Lito Lapid

KRIS is 'a very honest, sincere, kind, and thoughtful person,' Lapid gushes. 'My son Mark knows that very well, that's why he fell in love with her.'

By Gil Francis Arevalo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—"It's true love for Mark and Ms Kris Aquino," said Mark's father, K-4 senatorial candidate Lito Lapid.

"Both of them have an open mind and an open heart," the action star and governor of Pampanga said in an interview with INQUIRER Entertainment at the Renaissance Country Club and Restaurant in this city during a two-day visit here and some towns of Albay province. "Besides, I don't see any reason why my son will not be truly and deeply in love with her, for Kris is a woman to love."

Both Kris and Mark Lapid, who is also running for Pampanga governor, had earlier admitted publicly that they have been going out.

Lapid said his son is a very passionate person like Kris, "so they're very compatible with each other. I'm confident that they're meant for each other."

"Everyone has a past, so why not give them the chance?" Lapid added. "It's their right and happiness. Why forbid them or make so many bad remarks or offensive rumors about them?"

'I'D BE very, very happy if they'd be together for a very, very long time,' says Mark's father.

Kris has had two long-term relationships. One with actor Phillip Salvador, who is the father of her son Joshua. The other is with comedian and Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, which ended in a sensational, violent split in September 2003 but which resumed after a few months.

"Of course, I would be very, very happy if Mark and Kris would be together for a very, very long time," said Mark's father.

He emphasized that the relationship of his son and Kris is not meant to promote Mark's chances in the May 10 elections.

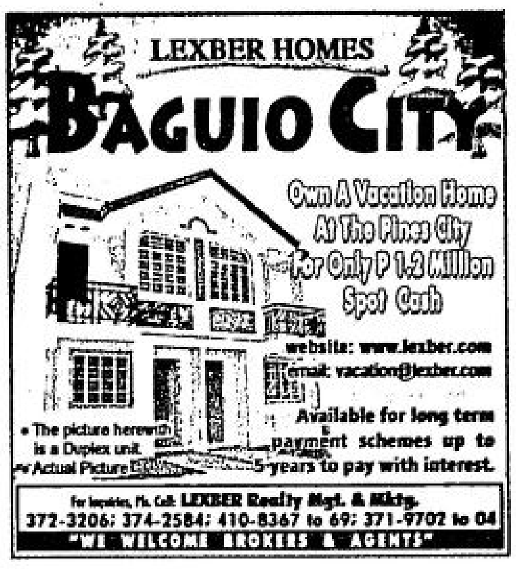
"Maybe most people see the situation that way, but it's not like that at all, for I know Kris," Lapid said. "She's a very honest, sincere, kind, and thoughtful person. My son knows that very well, that's why he fell in love with her. Whatever is happening to them right now is just between the two of them."

Lapid naturally defended his son, whom he described as more competent and prepared than he is as a politician.

"Mark doesn't need my advice anymore in politics," he said. "He's very much prepared to be governor. I know he will finish what I have started."

Lapid was governor of Pampanga for three consecutive terms.

Addressing critics of movie stars who enter politics, Lapid said, "they are wrong in saying that we're not ready to run for any public office because it's not our field of expertise. There are exceptions."



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Construction of Mayor Vi mountain resort stopped

LIPA CITY—The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) has ordered an immediate stop to the construction of a resort here reportedly owned by actress and Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto after it was found to have no environmental permit.

The mountain-view resort, called Baluarte Sur Leisure Farms and Resort, is located in the mountainous part of Barangay Talisay, a forest reserve in this city. Construction started in October 2003.

"The construction has to stop as it has no permit and the resort is being constructed on the part of the forest reserve area of the Mt. Malarayat mountain range," said Penro officer Danilo Morales.

He said the resort is being constructed in an environmentally critical area. Penro investigators, he added, learned that the Talisay River had dried up since the resort construction started.

Lipa's supply of potable water is good for only 15 years, according to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) study in 2000.

During the Lipa City Strategic Environmental Management Framework (SEMF) conducted by the Lipa Environment Management Planning Unit in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, it was revealed that Lipa's water table is fast drying up.

The UNDP study also revealed that the city's need for water will rise by 50 percent in 2005, 65 percent in 2010, 82 percent in 2015, and 91 percent in 2020.

According to a study conducted by engineer Domingo Semana that was included in the SEMF, in 1999, out of the 161 wells run by the Lipa Water District (LWD), 24 wells were already dried up. Semana, former chief of the LWD, blamed this on the continuous devasta-

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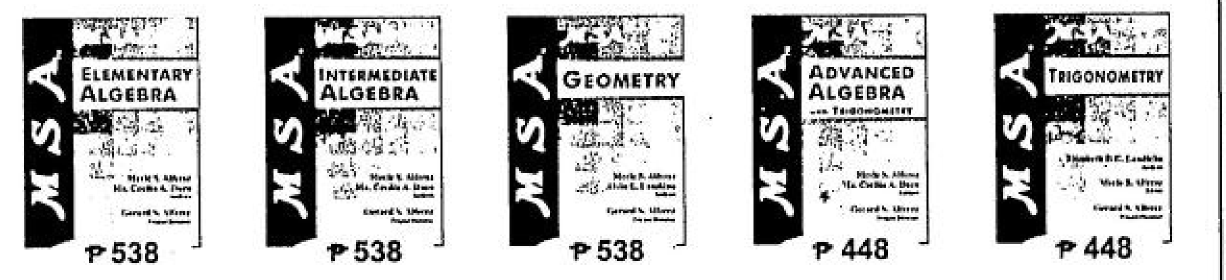

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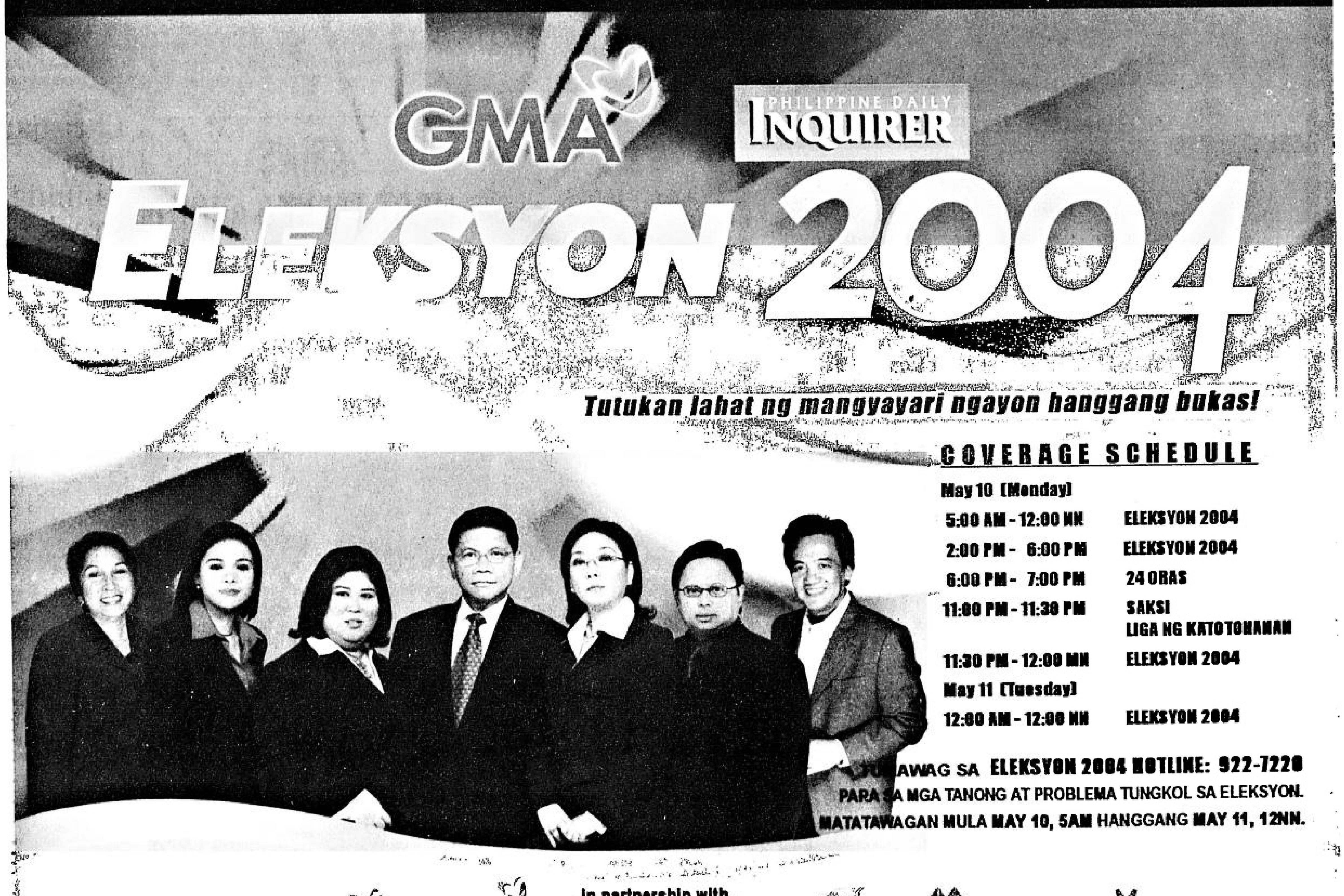

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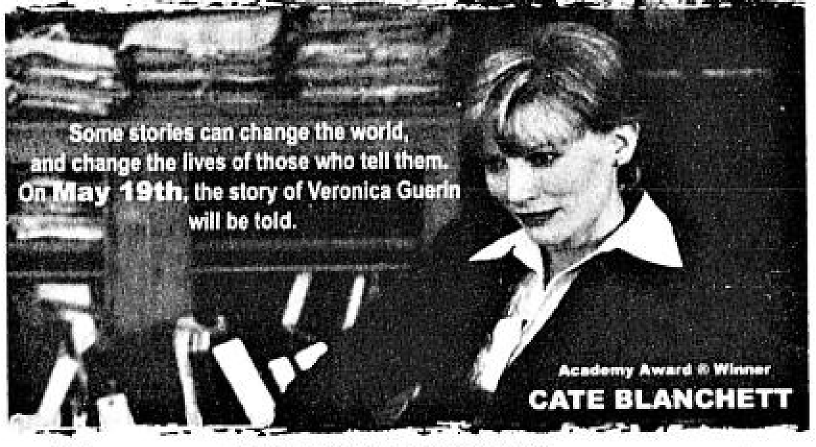
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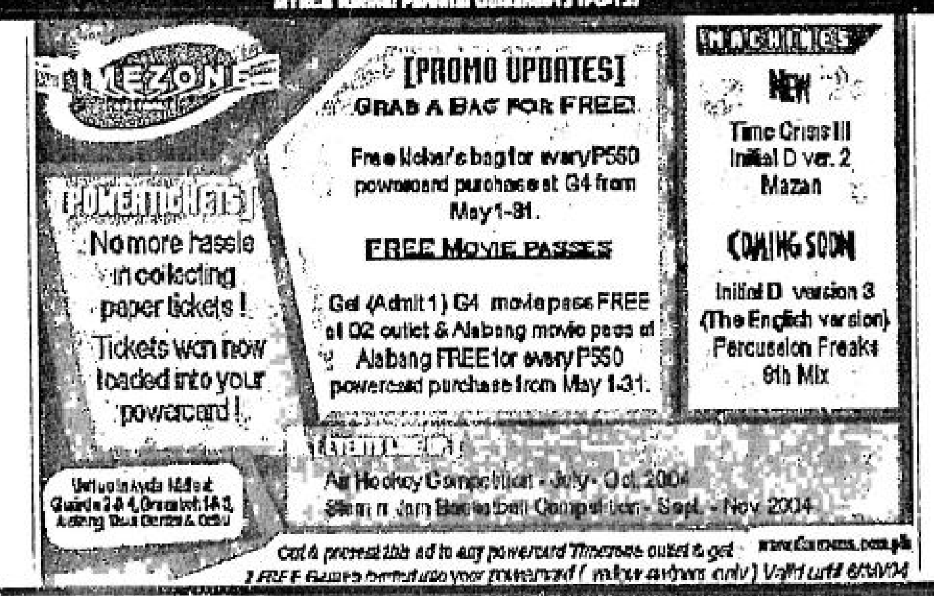
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DID YOU KNOW...

Richard Gomez, wife **Lucy** and their pretty daughter, **Juliana**, were seen doing their grocery shopping at Price Smart at The Fort a few days ago. They bought mostly household stuff like plastic pails, toiletries, which cost them P42,000.

Those text votes have it

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW that "American Idol" can be watched here on delayed telecast on Star World and ABC-5, excitement over the singing search has mounted.

This feeds off our love for contests, and is further heightened by the fact that two of "AI's" finalists were Fil-Americans.

Too bad, **Camile Velasco** fell by the wayside after some rounds despite Fil-Ams' enthusiastic text-voting campaign.

Truth to tell, however, the fact that there were two Fil-Am bets to support could in effect have divided our sectors' text votes.

Thus, Camile's departure can be seen to be some sort of "blessing in disguise," because now that **Jasmine Trias** is the sole surviving Pinoy bet (as of this writing) in the competition, Fil-Ams' text-voting campaign can now be much more coordinated and focused.

In fact, some observers surmise that, one reason why Jasmine has survived thus far is the flurry of Fil-Am text votes that are now exclusively devoted to helping assure her victory.

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WALT Disney Pictures' cartoon feature, "Home on the Range," tells a wild and wooly tale, and features a colorful cast of animal characters and some longer-than-life humans.

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Plot line: When a greedy outlaw named Almeda Slim schemes to take possession of the "Parch of Heaven" dairy farm, three determined cows (voiced by Barr, Dench and Tilly), a karate-kicking stallion (Gooding), and a colorful corral of critters join forces to save the farm.

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Hugh Jackman was considered by the audience to be a good choice for the role. Moviegoers loved Van Helsing's 'James Bond' styled weapons. It is a difficult task to make advanced historical weapons look believable. Van Helsing does a good job.

The effects were rated A+ by the audience . Frankenstein's monster is not just painted green with bolts out his neck, and Dracula is not just a guy with fangs. Dracula and the Wolf Man does some scary difficult transformations .The flying "brides" of Dracula and the flying 'dead' babies were considered the best . The 15 foot Mr. Hyde was real cool.

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ADVT

ASIA'S MOST TALKED-ABOUT BLOCKBUSTER. TAKING HOLLYWOOD BY STORM.
TUNE-IN TO 90.7 LOVE RADIO FOR FREE INVITES ON THE PREMIERE OF THE MOVIE ON MAY 11, TUESDAY AT THE SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 1, 7:30 PM
SHUN EUN-KYUNG
MY WIFE IS A GANGSTER
SHE KICKS. SHE PUNCHES. SHE COOKS.
DIRECTED BY CHO JIN - KYUN
VIVA
OPENS MAY 12

Christian on a winning streak

CHRISTIAN Bautista may not have brought home the grand prize in last year's "Star in a Million" competition, but he's certainly on a winning streak now, with a chart-topping album and a growing fan base.

MTV's Rising Star for April landed in "MTV Diyes'" Top Ten, not a bad feat for a newbie. His hit single and music video, "The Way You Look at Me," from Warner Music Philippines is in the MYX daily countdown, edging out the likes of Britney Spears and Josh Groban.

The 22-year-old Christian, a landscape architecture graduate, performs in shows in Davao on May 21 and 22, and in Cavite on May 30.

He will also sing on Wednesday, May 12, at the new Dish located inside ABS-CBN.

For details, call Stages Production Specialists Inc. at 8181111 local 250, or visit www.christianbautista.rocks.it.

See'eMall!

AYALA CINEMAS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4		GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 VAN HELSING	1 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	1 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	5 VAN HELSING	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 VAN HELSING 2 25, 5 10, 7 55 10 40	1 VAN HELSING
2 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	2 VAN HELSING	2 STARSKY & HUTCH	6 VAN HELSING	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 VAN HELSING 3 05 5 50 8 35 11 20	2 HELLBOY
3 STARSKY & HUTCH	3 VAN HELSING	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 VAN HELSING 12 10 3 00 5 50 8 40 11 30	7 MAN ON FIRE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 VAN HELSING 1 00, 3 45 6 30, 9 15, 12 00	3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 SCHOOL OF ROCK	4 I WILL SURVIVE	4 SCHOOL OF ROCK		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 STARSKY & HUTCH 1 50, 4 00 6 10, 8 20, 10 30	4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 VAN HELSING		GB1 GREENBELT 1		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE... 1 10 3 10 5 10 [illegible]	5 PAYCHECK
		1 I WILL SURVIVE 11:50, 2 00, 4:10, 6 20, 8 30			
		2 VAN HELSING 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00			

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
TUNOG ACOUSTIC by Mellow Touch feat. NINA May 13, 6 00pm	GREAT OLYMPIC WORLD SALE May 10 to 19, 2004	KIDS DAY CARE CULMINATING ACTIVITY May 13 2004

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

GLORIETTA	GREENBELT
HARD ROCK CAFÉ, GLORIETTA 3 For inquiries, pls. call 8934661 to 66	MERK'S: Happy Hour-Romy Posadas; Silk & Steel TAVERN ON THE SQUARE: For inquiries, pls call 757-4484/85

Onstage
Maximedia presents MARTIN NIEVERA: Tough Crowd
June 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 & 26

EXPO
TRADE HALL FOR EXHIBITS, EVENTS AND MORE!
For inquiries and bookings, please call 750-4982 to 84

NOW SHOWING AT ALL AYALA CINEMAS

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB 3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart).

Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

For screening schedules, pls. call 729-7777.

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

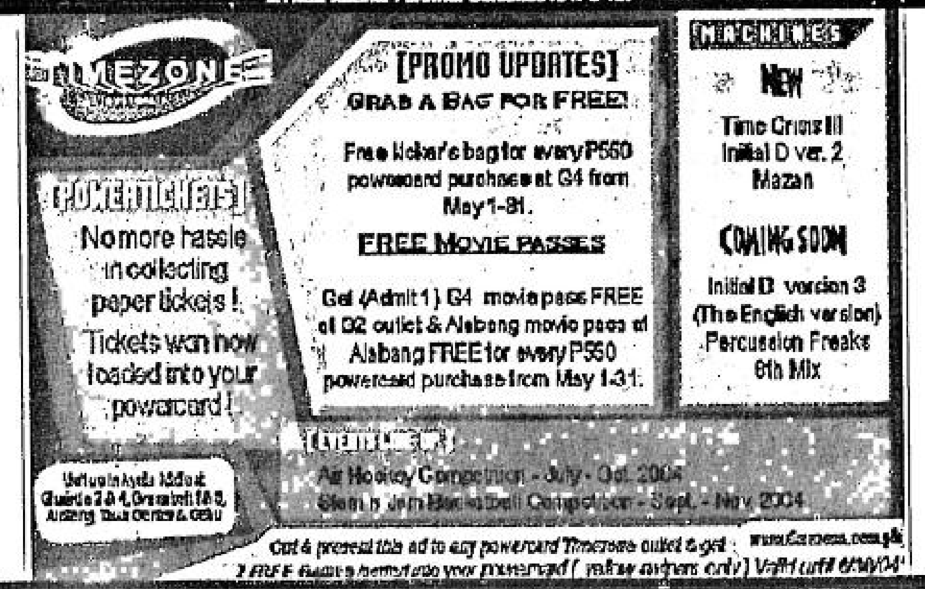
AYALA CINEMAS
Lov'eMall!

ADVENTURE LIVES FOREVER
VAN HELSING

A MUST SEE AYALA CINEMAS EXCLUSIVE

Some stories can change the world,
and change the lives of those who tell them.
On May 19th, the story of Veronica Guerin
will be told.
Academy Award ® Winner
CATE BLANCHETT

A Jerry Bruckheimer Production / A Joel Schumacher Film
VERONICA GUERIN
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance13 (PG-13)



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FREE MOVIE PASSES
Get (Admit 1) G4 movie pass FREE at G2 outlet & Alabang movie pass at Alabang FREE for every P550 powercard purchase from May 1-31.

MACHINES
NEW
Time Crisis III
Initial D ver. 2
Mazan

COMING SOON
Initial D version 3 (The English version)
Percussion Freaks 6th Mix

[EVENTS LINEUP]
Air Hockey Competition - July - Oct. 2004
Slam n Jam Basketball Competition - Sept. - Nov. 2004

[illegible]

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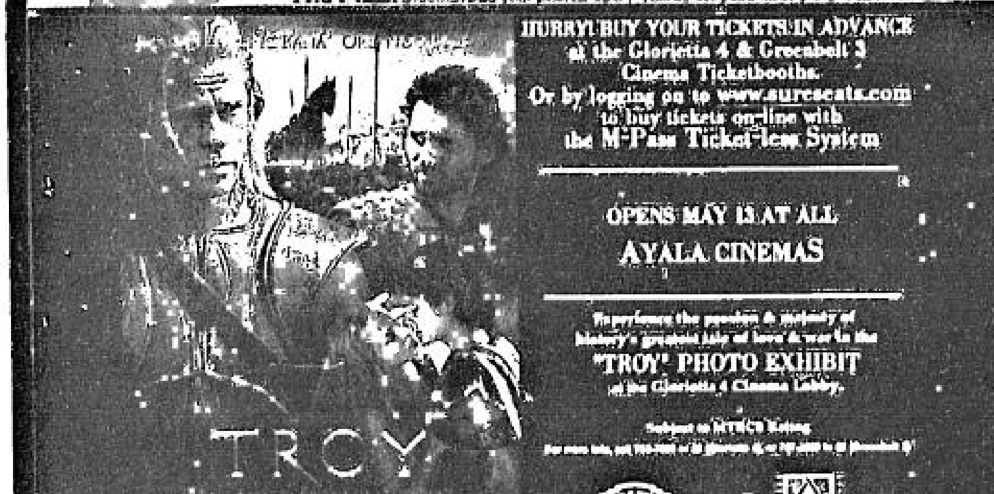

HURRY! BUY YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE at the Glorietta 4 & Greenbelt 3 Cinema Ticketbooths.
Or by logging on to www.sureseats.com to buy tickets on-line with the M-Pass Ticket-less System

OPENS MAY 13 AT ALL AYALA CINEMAS

Experience the passion & majesty of history's greatest tale of love & war in the "TROY" PHOTO EXHIBIT at the Glorietta 4 Cinema Lobby.

Subject to MTRCB Rating

AYALA CINEMAS
Lov'eMall!

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEXT HOTLINE: 0917-6095900 • CUSTOMER SERVICE HOTLINE: Glorietta - 752-7272; from 10am to 8pm • Greenbelt - 757-4853; from 11am to 12mn • Alabang Town Center - 842-2782; from 10am to 8pm Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231-5342 loc 324 • AYALA CINEMA LINKS: For screening times call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart). Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

AYALA CENTER
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Lov'eMall!

DID YOU KNOW...

Richard Gomez, wife **Lucy** and their pretty daughter, **Juliana**, were seen doing their grocery shopping at Price Smart at The Fort a few days ago. They bought mostly household stuff like plastic pails, toiletries, which cost them P42,000.

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ADVT

Those text votes have it

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW that "American Idol" can be watched here on delayed telecast on Star World and ABC-5, excitement over the singing search has mounted.

This feeds off our love for contests, and is further heightened by the fact that two of "AI's" finalists were Fil-Americans.

Too bad, **Camile Velasco** fell by the wayside after some rounds despite Fil-Ams' enthusiastic text-voting campaign.

Truth to tell, however, the fact that there were two Fil-Am bets to support could in effect have divided our sectors' text votes.

Thus, Camile's departure can be seen to be some sort of "blessing in disguise," because now that **Jasmine Trias** is the sole surviving Pinoy bet (as of this writing) in the competition, Fil-Ams' text-voting campaign can now be much more coordinated and focused.

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SHUN EUN-KYUNG
MY WIFE IS A GANGSTER
SHE KICKS. SHE PUNCHES. SHE COOKS.
DIRECTED BY CHO JIN - KYUN
VIVA
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SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL 6331901

1	VAN HELSING
2	PAYCHECK
3	VAN HELSING
4	STARSKY & HUTCH
5	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
6	MAN ON FIRE
7	HAUNTED SPIRIT
8	SCHOOL OF ROCK
9	I WILL SURVIVE
10	HELLBOY
11	BOOBITA ROSE
12	WHOLE 10 YARDS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	MAN ON FIRE
3	BOOBITA ROSE
4	VAN HELSING
5	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
6	HELLBOY
7	VAN HELSING
8	PETER PAN
9	I WILL SURVIVE
10	STARSKY & HUTCH
11	SCHOOL OF ROCK
12	VAN HELSING

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	HELLBOY
2	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
3	PAYCHECK
4	VAN HELSING
5	STARSKY & HUTCH
6	VAN HELSING
7	SCHOOL OF ROCK
8	HAUNTED SPIRIT
9	I WILL SURVIVE
10	BOOBITA ROSE
11	MAN ON FIRE
12	VAN HELSING

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	VAN HELSING
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK
3	I WILL SURVIVE
4	HELLBOY
5	MAN ON FIRE
6	STARSKY & HUTCH
7	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
8	VAN HELSING

SM CITY STA. MESA 7149522 • 7161416

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	MAN ON FIRE
3	VAN HELSING
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5	VAN HELSING
6	SCHOOL OF ROCK
7	HELLBOY
8	STARSKY & HUTCH
9	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
10	I WILL SURVIVE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2514302

1	HELLBOY
2	VAN HELSING
3	VAN HELSING
4	I WILL SURVIVE

North

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 933 2013 to 17

1	HELLBOY
2	I WILL SURVIVE
3	MAN ON FIRE
4	PAYCHECK

SM CITY PAMPANGA 7128015

1	VAN HELSING
2	VAN HELSING
3	PETER PAN
4	SCHOOL OF ROCK
5	MAN ON FIRE
6	I WILL SURVIVE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4464505

1	STARSKY & HUTCH
2	THE CURSE
3	I WILL SURVIVE
4	MAN ON FIRE

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS 8066888

1	HELLBOY
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK
3	VAN HELSING
4	I WILL SURVIVE
5	MAN ON FIRE
6	BOOBITA ROSE
7	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
8	VAN HELSING
9	STARSKY & HUTCH
10	HAUNTED SPIRIT

SM CITY BICUTAN 7763055

1	VAN HELSING
2	I WILL SURVIVE
3	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
4	VAN HELSING

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT 8294975

1	VAN HELSING
2	I WILL SURVIVE
3	VAN HELSING
4	CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN

SM CITY BACOOR (046)4173888

1	MAN ON FIRE
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK
3	VAN HELSING
4	I WILL SURVIVE
5	VAN HELSING
6	I WILL SURVIVE
7	HAUNTED SPIRIT
8	HELLBOY

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80

1	PETER PAN
2	TAKING LIVES
3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4	I WILL SURVIVE

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU (032) 2313876

1	VAN HELSING
2	VAN HELSING
3	PETER PAN
4	SCHOOL OF ROCK
5	PAYCHECK
6	TAKING LIVES
7	I WILL SURVIVE
8	HELLBOY

SM CITY ILOILO (033) 3209422

1	UNINVITED
2	RESERVED
3	PAYCHECK
4	I WILL SURVIVE
5	PETER PAN
6	HELLBOY
7	RESERVED
8	TAKING LIVES

SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2978998

1	VAN HELSING
2	PETER PAN
3	I WILL SURVIVE
4	PAYCHECK
5	VAN HELSING
6	HELLBOY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8592884

1	TAKING LIVES
2	PETER PAN
3	THE CURSE
4	HELL BOY

—THE—
PODIUM
CINEMA

1
VAN HELSING
12:05 FS/ 12:20 MF/
3:00/5:40/ 8:20/10:35
LFS/11:00 LMF/1:15 END

2
STARSKY & HUTCH
1:20 FS/1:50 MF/4:05/
6:20/ 8:35/ 10:20 LFS/
10:50 LMF/ 12:35 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
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SM CINEMA

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PHOTO EXHIBIT

Don't miss the chance to see the scene from the movie TROY in a photo exhibit t be held at the SM Megamall Cinema lobby starting May 2.

regular showing | may 13 2004
at the SM Cinemas
Subject to MTRCB Rating

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

Jojo Alejar hosts new RJTV show

SHOW TIME

EVERY night from Monday to Friday starting tonight, Jojo Alejar hosts a new live television show called "Jojo A. All The Way."

The new show will be all about PEACE—People, Events, Advocacies, Commerce, Entertainment—and will be seen every night, 9 to 10 p.m. on RJTV 29 on regular channel, as well as on major cable networks nationwide: Sky Cable 61, Home Cable 57, Destiny Cable 87, and Sun Cable 65.

Alejar, a singer and dancer, has taken time out from show business to focus on his work as chief of staff to Parañaque Rep. Ed "Edza" Zialcita.

The new show will also feature live performances as well as interactive portions with viewers.

Segments include Balitaaaktakan, comments on headlines, by the host as well as by viewers; Ka-Talk, or Kabataan Talk, in which kids are asked "grown-up" questions; Huli Cam, humorous and candid moments as captured by the camera; and others.

"Jojo A. All the Way" is a co-production of RJ Jacinto of RJTV and Jojo P. Alejar of All The Way Media-Values Co.

ALEJAR

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	VAN HELSING
2 (SDDS)	HELLBOY
3 (DTS)	CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
4 GOLD (DTS)	MAN OF FIRE
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	WHOLE TEN YARDS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	STARSKY & HUTCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	VAN HELSING
8 [illegible]	I WILL SURVIVE
9 [illegible]	SCHOOL OF ROCK
10 [illegible]	BIG FISH

EASTWOOD CINEMAS (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
2 (DOLBY)	VAN HELSING
3 (DOLBY)	STARSKY & HUTCH
4 (DOLBY)	I WILL SURVIVE

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	VAN HELSING
3	ANIMAL

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	I WILL SURVIVE
	WHOLE 10 YARD
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	VAN HELSING
5	

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	CHECK - INN
2	ANIMAL
3	HELLBOY
4	I WILL SURVIVE
5	VAN HELSING
6	HAUNTED SPIRIT

M star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

1	VAN HELSING
2	I WILL SURVIVE

PREMIERE CINEMA (Makati City) tel 892.2503 THX

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	EVIL - 4
2	MY GOOD LAWYERS WIFE
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588

5	RESERVE
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	
9 (DOLBY)	

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	ANIMAL
2	HELLBOY
3	MAN OF FIRE
4 (SDDS)	STARSKY & HUTCH
5	I WILL SURVIVE
6 (DOLBY)	VAN HELSING
7 (DTS)	VAN HELSING
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0083

1	RESERVE
2 (SDDS)	
3 (DTS)	
4 (DOLBY)	
5	

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795

1	MAN ON FIRE
2	ITLOG
3 (DTS)	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4	ANIMAL
5 (SDDS)	VAN HELSING

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470

1	RESERVE

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	CARMEN
Lords	MEN'S

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	VAN HELSING
3	VENUS
4	RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	VAN HELSING
2	WHOLE 10 YARD
3	RESERVE
4	I WILL SURVIVE
5	ANIMAL

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	KILL BILL
2	ANIMAL

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Araneta Center
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. [illegible]

1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY [illegible])	I WILL SURVIVE
4 (SDDS)	VAN HELSING
5 (DTS)	JERSEY GIRL
6	CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
7	HELLBOY

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	MAN OF FIRE
2	BONE SNATCHERS
3 (DTS EX)	I WILL SURVIVE
4	CARMEN

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	HOUSE DEAD
3 (DOLBY)	MAN OF FIRE
4 (DTS)	BONE SNATCHERS

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	PETER PAN
2	TAKING LIVES
3 (DOLBY)	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 (DTS)	HELLBOY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2 (DTS)	HELLBOY
3 (DOLBY)	SCHOOL OF ROCK
4	WHOLE 10 YARD

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
3 (DTS)	SCHOOL OF ROCK
4	WHOLE 10 YARD

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) t (045) 9821727

1	PETER PAN
2	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 (DOLBY)	TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	PETER PAN
2	PAY CHECK
3 (DOLBY)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 (DTS)	TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1	STARSKY & HUTCH
2	I WILL SURVIVE
3	MAN OF FIRE

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	TWISTED
2	CHECK - INN
3	I WILL SURVIVE
4 (DTS)	DALAWANG PISNGI

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
2	BONE SNATCHERS
3 (DTS)	I WILL SURVIVE
4	SCHOOL OF ROCK
5	WHOLE 10 YARD

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	I WILL SURVIVE
2	NAGDADALAGA

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 249.2558

1	WHOLE 10 YARD
2	I WILL SURVIVE
3	HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	ANIMAL
2	TAKING LIVES
3 (DTS)	PASSION OF CHRIST
4 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK

Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	HELLBOY
2	WHOLE 10 YARD
3	MAN OF FIRE
4	STARSKY & HUTCH

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	CHECK -INN
2	TAKING LIVES

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Construction of Mayor Vi mountain . . .

From page C1

tion of the city's water reserves, particularly that of Mt. Malarayat.

"It was city engineer (Nerio) Dudoy Ronquillo who first came to me to develop the site," said resort caretaker Ireneo de la Torre, a former barangay official. "He owns this mountain that he bought for P51 per square meter two years ago. Then Sen. Ralph Recto visited the site, and he came back later. Mayor Vi even came to me to check on the development of the construction."

Today, De la Torre added, the value of the land in Talisay, particularly near the 3.5-hectare mountain property in Barangay Talisay East, where the construction is still continuing, has since risen to P200 per square meter.

De La Torre said the resort is worth P60 million and will compete with the best in Lipa because of its beautiful design by Bill Rosmarino, who also designed Mayor Vi's beautification project as well as the mini-fountains and falls that adorn the city's main intersections.

A 100-meter steep concrete road has been built leading to the resort.

At the construction site itself, there were no posters, mayor's permit, building permit, or any sign that would indicate that the city government allowed the construction.

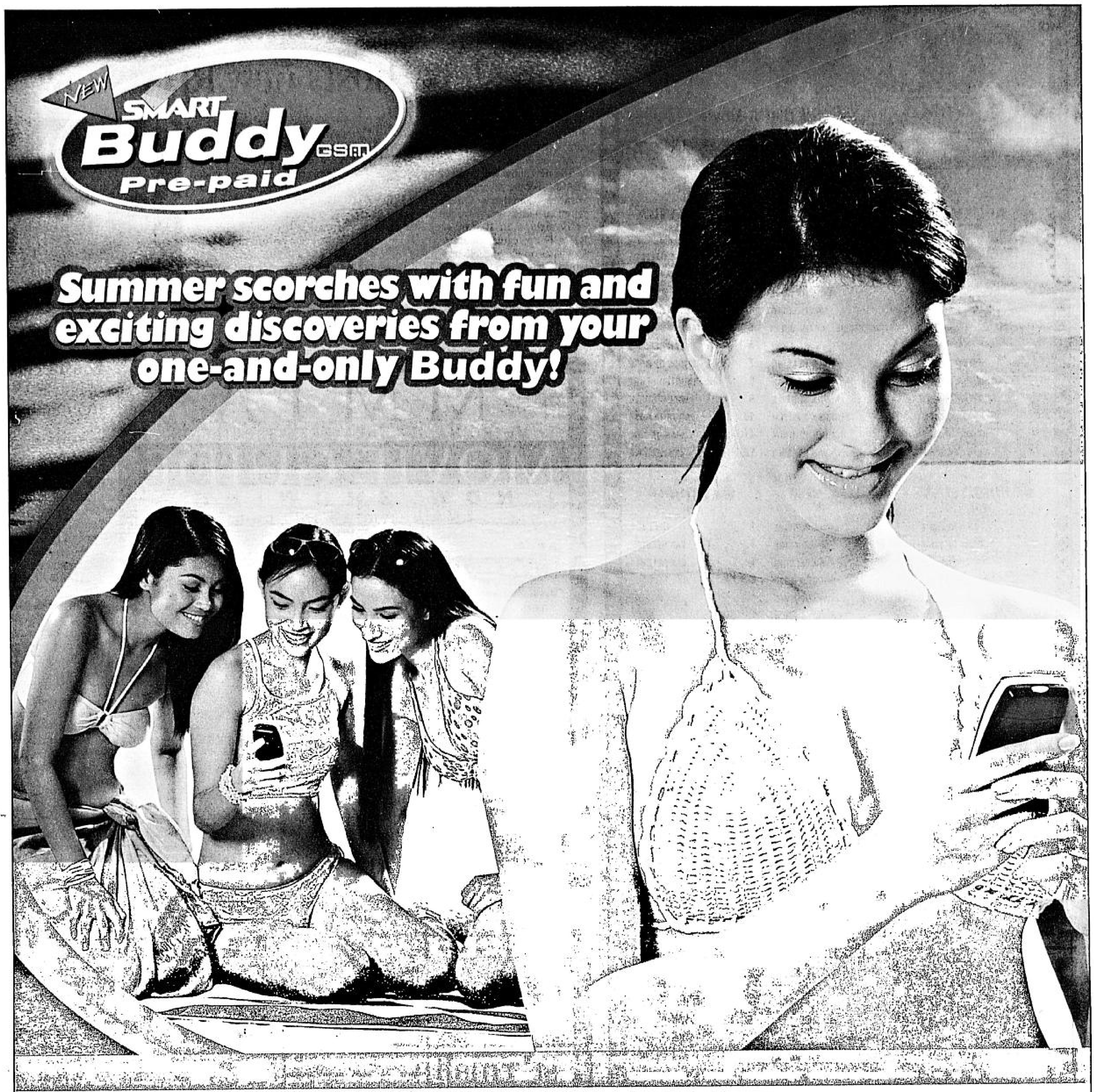
Penro records showed that the resort consultant, Gary Escolano, had only applied for amnesty and paid P1,000 for it. But the amnesty lapsed on April 17.

Mt. Malarayat and all the mountains and hills in Barangay Talisay, including Mt. Talisay, have had DENR-declared forest reserve areas since the 1930s, during the Manuel L. Quezon administration.

Lavinia Dimayuga, Lipa City's assistant planning and development officer, said the mountains and hills of Barangay Talisay are protected areas and that she has never heard of any construction done in the area.

City engineer Ronquillo said the resort construction was legal as the site was not part of the forest reserve area. But he stressed that he and the city government have nothing to do with the construction project.

The INQUIRER tried to get Mayor Vi's comments but she was not in her office. The Inquirer also called her on her cellular phone several times but the phone was never answered. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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summer2
sunshine

Text LOGO <keyword> to 234.

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sunshine2
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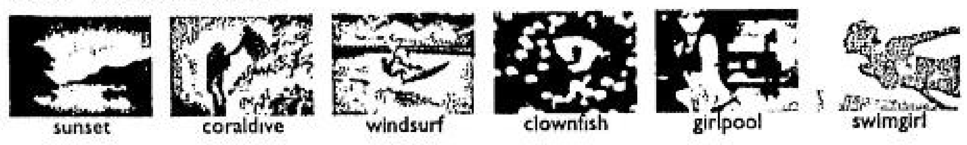
MMS WALLPAPERS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clownfish
girlpool
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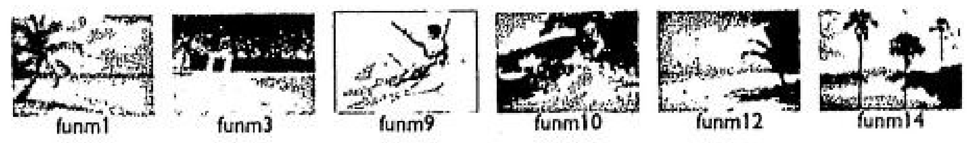
funm1
funm3
funm9
funm10
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Summer Girls	LFO	FUN6
Walking On Sunshine	Katrina and the Waves	FUN7
Can't Help Falling In Love	F4	FUN8
Strawberry Fields Forever	Beatles	FUN9
Surfer Girl	Beach Boys	FUN10
Cruel Summer	Bananarama	FUN11
Happy	Alexia	FUN12
Summertime	Aaron Carter	FUN13

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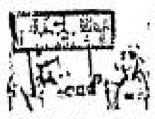
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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
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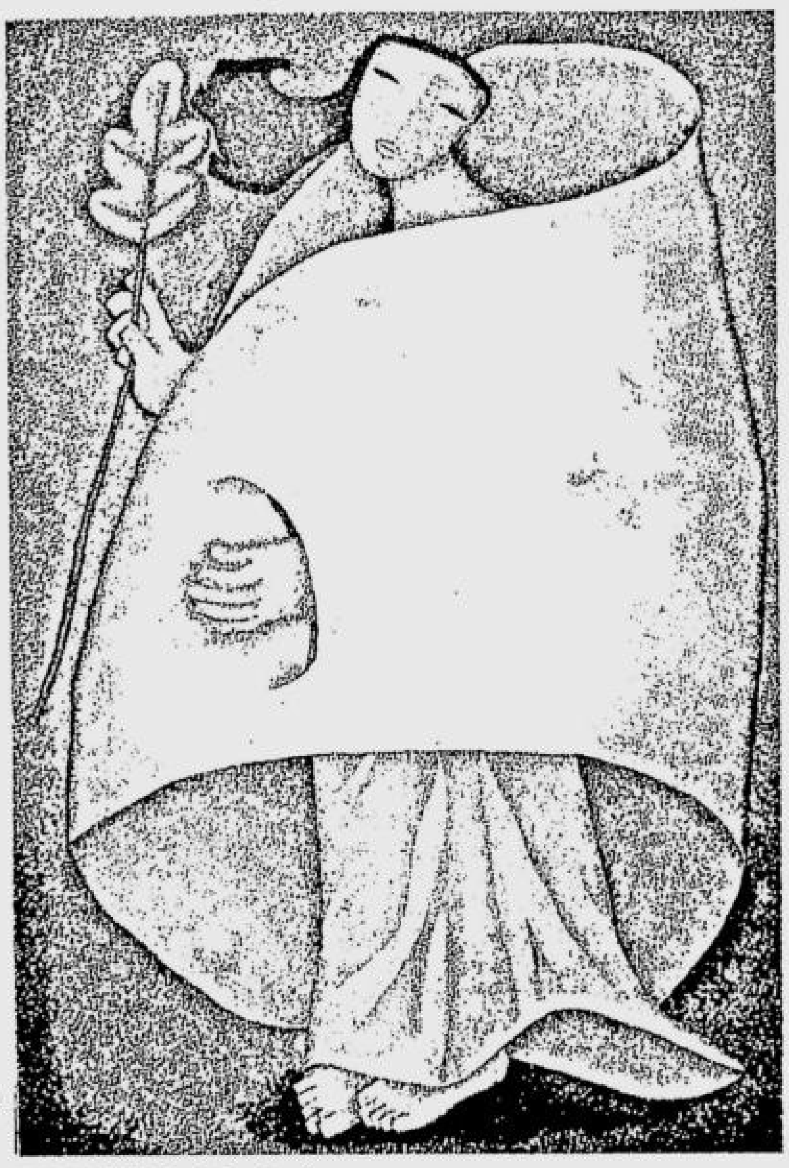
MATERNAL love in art
/D2

Jack Salud's art of serenity



"**PEACEFUL** Anticipation"

UNIVERSAL yet multicultural in spirit, formally constructed yet nostalgic, reductive, sentimental, textured and decorative yet unadorned, chromatic and tonal...

There is an endless list of utterly divergent qualities which are held together in Jack Salud's work.

Once more, the pointillist artist known for his childlike visions paints scenes of serenity and bliss, a balm for these times of turmoil in "Dotted Serenity," Salud's 13th one-man exhibit, which is running at the Gallery 139, 3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center.

Painstakingly executed with more than a million delicate dots of paint, the series shall feature large-scale canvases of Salud's trademark energetic yet restful shapes set amid a breezy background of cascading leaves.

Women in solitude collecting leaves and children at play are but a few of his subjects in this seven-piece exhibit.

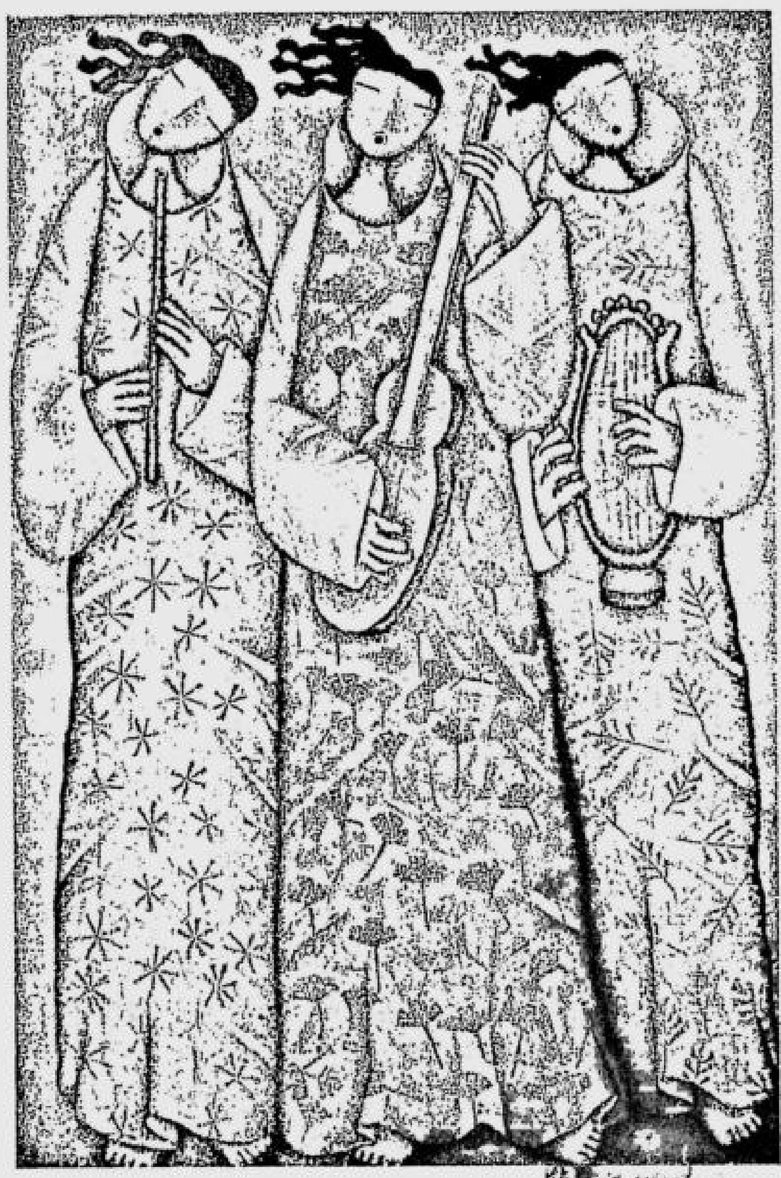
Salud first entered the art scene in 1996 when he was invited by Chichi Salas of Gallery Genesis to participate in their annual "Kulay sa Tubig" watercolor group exhibition.

In 1997, he opened his first solo exhibit at Ayala Museum, "Love, Lovesongs and Lullabies" upon the approval of the museums' curator Sonia Neri. Salud consequently received the prestigious commission to design two of the museum's Christmas cards that year.

In 1999, he opened his first international solo exhibit in Roppongi, Tokyo, through the invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In the words of Cid Reyes, renowned art critic, "Salud's art aches with such emotional feelings, but with a mixture of understated elegance and a surfeit of ornamentalism. But it is the Oriental sentiment that so pervade the mood of his works—a tranquilizing peace that envelopes every figure in hair domestic landscapes."

All the works, rendered in acrylic, reflects the artist's view that "simple and pure pleasures are what gives a person true happiness and spiritual contentment."

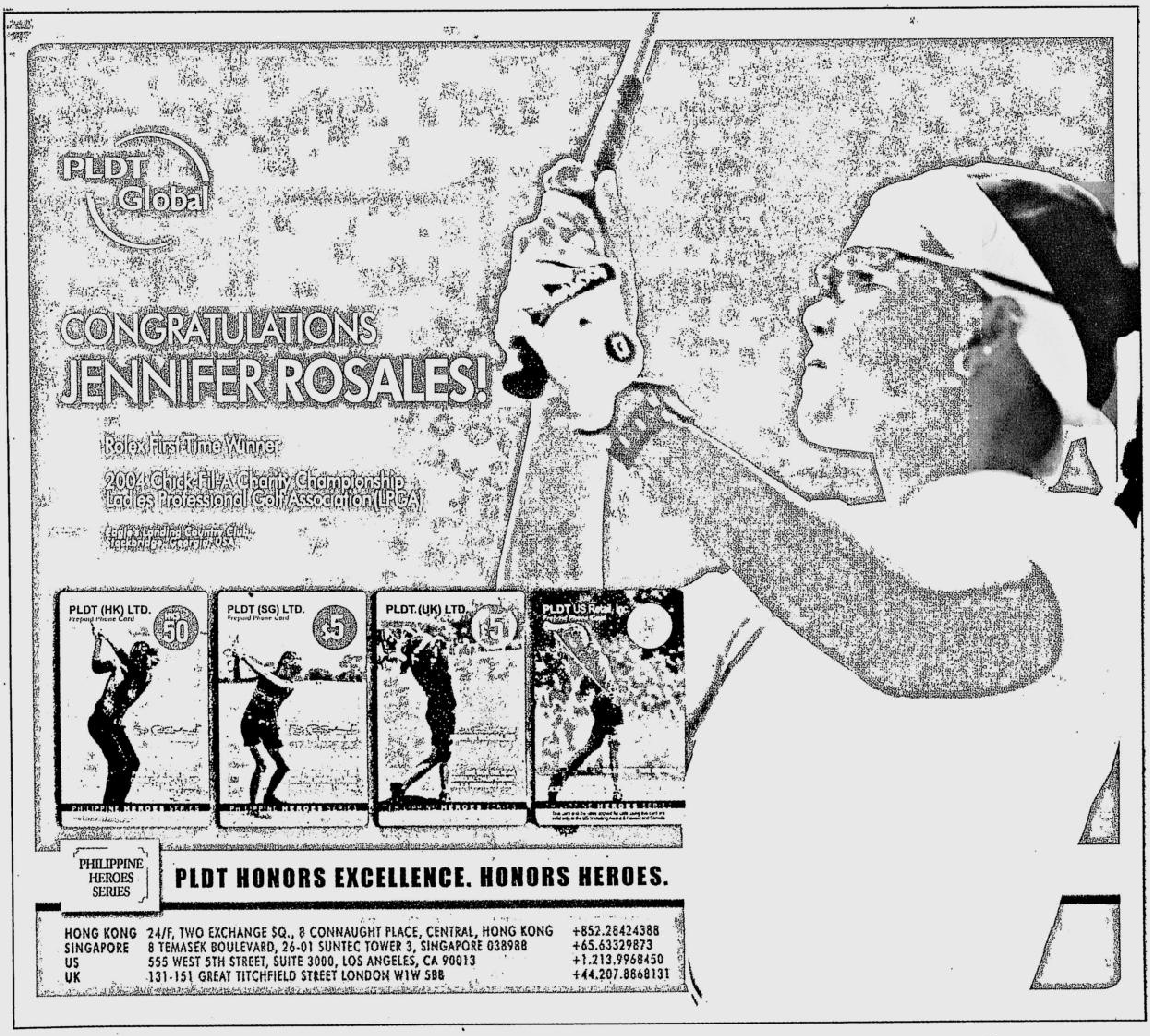
Call 7289724 or e-mail jcksalud@info.com.ph.



"**AFTERNOON** Lullaby"

The artist trains his pointillist style anew at rendering canvases that are refreshing and liberating

JACK Salud



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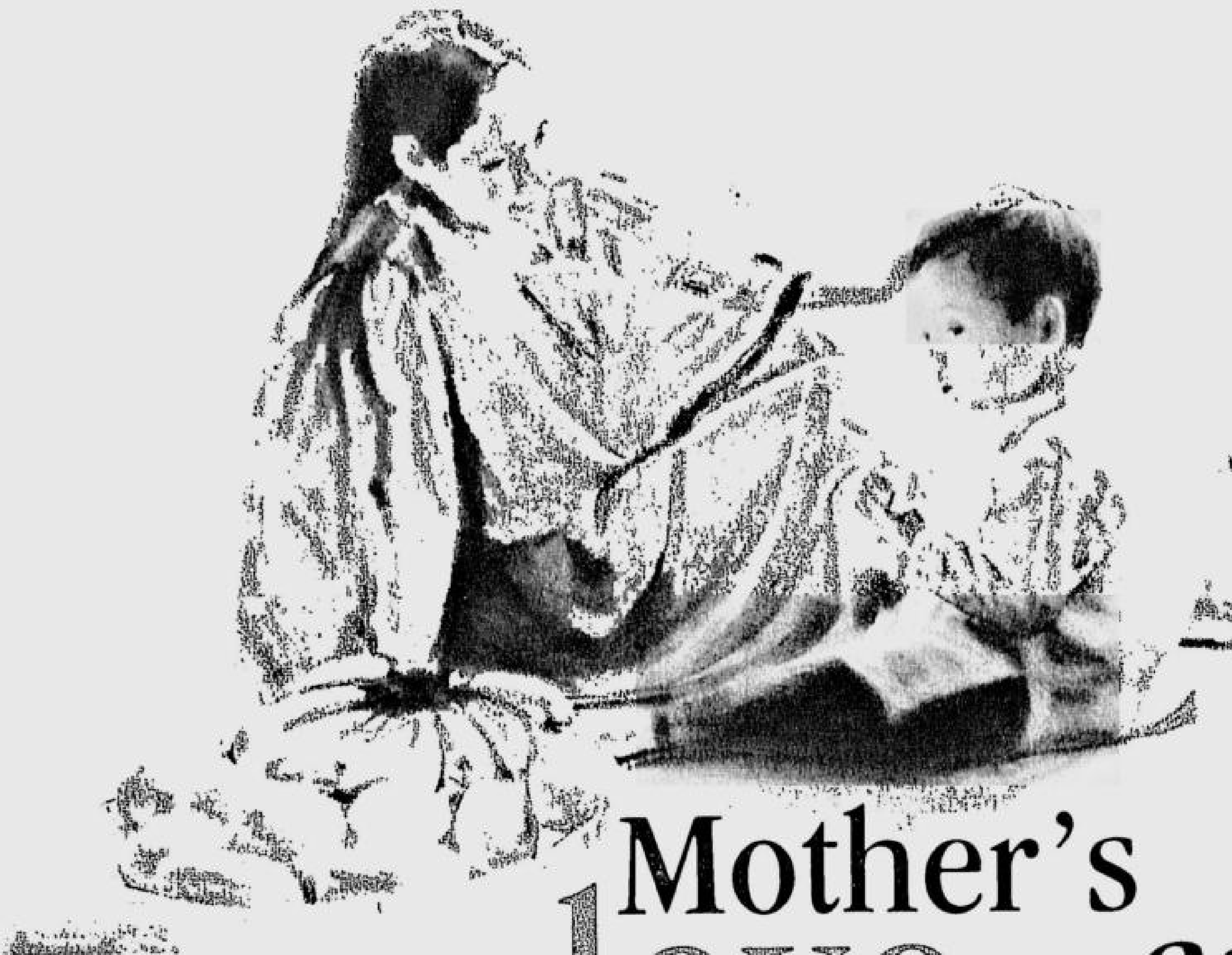
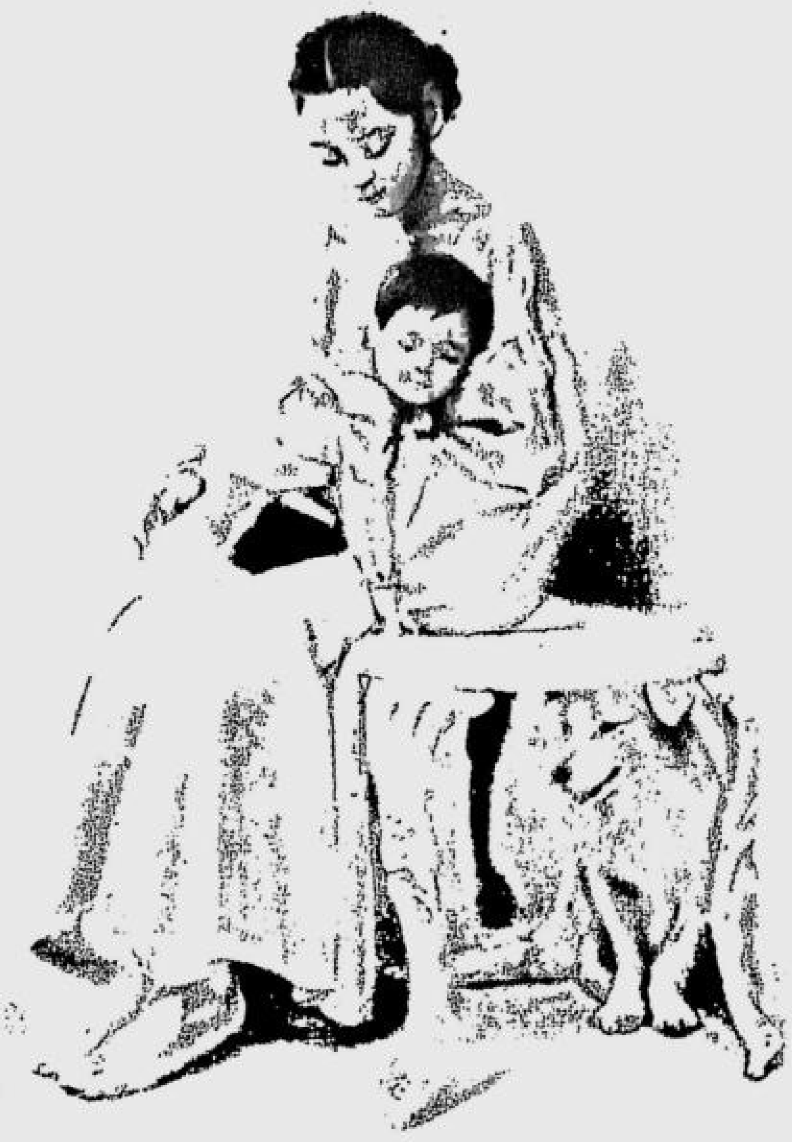
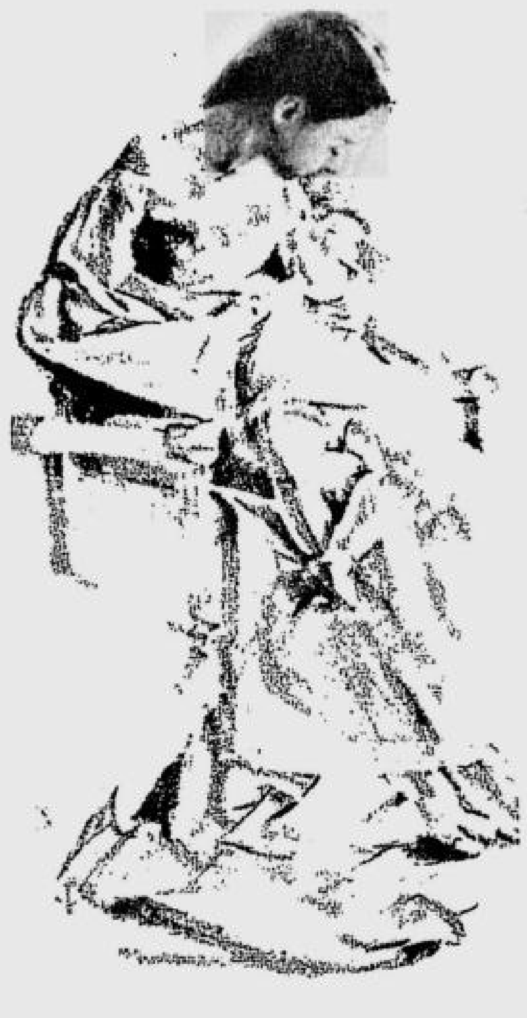

"NOURISH"

Mother's love as art


"FRIEND"


"CLOSER"

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Contributor

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Last year, noted artist Araceli Dans invited Janice to join one of her exhibits after they had sketched together and the esteemed artist was very impressed with the young woman's work. "Janice's years of training and discipline in drawing on-the-spot live models has helped her evolve into a style that is both realistic and original," Dans says, "The spontaneous, sweeping strokes of her drawings reveal a virtuosity and crispness of style that touches the sensibilities of the viewer. A painter's drawings provide us with a skeletal view of his or her artistic training, regardless of whether that training is formal or informal."

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Artist of merit

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Of the works at this exhibit, Araceli Dans says, "Janice's drawings prove her solid, unquestionable background as a true artist of merit, worthy of being elevated with anticipation to the future hierarchy of recognized Philippine artists."

Young's works clearly capture the essence of love between mother and child. Her images, their facial expressions and Young's penchant for the Filipino costume give her artworks a distinct warmth all their own. Using actual mother-child pairs "so that the rapport will be natural," she says, it took her an average of one week per work.

For this second one-woman show, Young has decided to give part of the proceeds to fund the rehabilitation of the pediatrics ward of the Philippine General Hospital.

Being a mother herself, she knows the difficulties of having a sick child in the hospital. "The pediatrics ward at the PGH needs a lot of help. And when I was asked if I could help in the rehabilitation project, I thought of my own children then thought of the children at the PGH and so I willingly said yes."

Young says the show is a tribute to all mothers and to her own mother. "Love comes naturally for a mother. I was working much from my own memory, although I cannot really remember the exact moments from my childhood, I tried to bring that out in my work for this exhibit. Like they say, you cannot give what you do not have," she says.

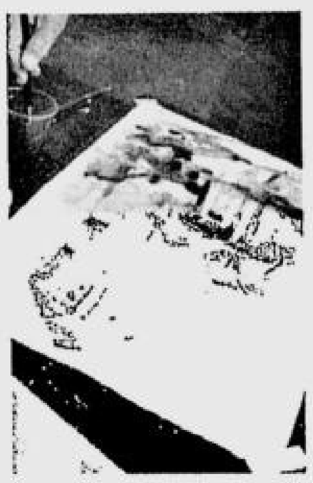
And if we were to judge by Young's works at "Birthright," hers was a childhood filled with love, peace and grace—the same emotions that are evoked as one views her simple but heartwarming tribute to the woman whose love knows no bounds.

"Birthright" is running at Gallery 828 on the 4th level of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall until May 21.

Intimate affairs with artists

ANGEL Cacnio leads a watercolor painting session at Greenbelt 3 Park's fountain area.

BENCAB opens "An Affair with the Masters" with a session on portrait drawing with charcoal.


CACNIO'S painting with the Greenbelt Park and skyline as inspiration

TOP Filipino artists shared their talent and skill in a series of workshops at the Ayala Museum and Greenbelt Park.

Dubbed "An Affair with the Masters," the art event drew people of all ages to spend Saturday afternoons learning from Ben Cabrera, noted watercolorist Angel Cacnio, and younger contemporary artists Elmer Borlongan, Leslie de Chavez and Ferdie Doctolero.

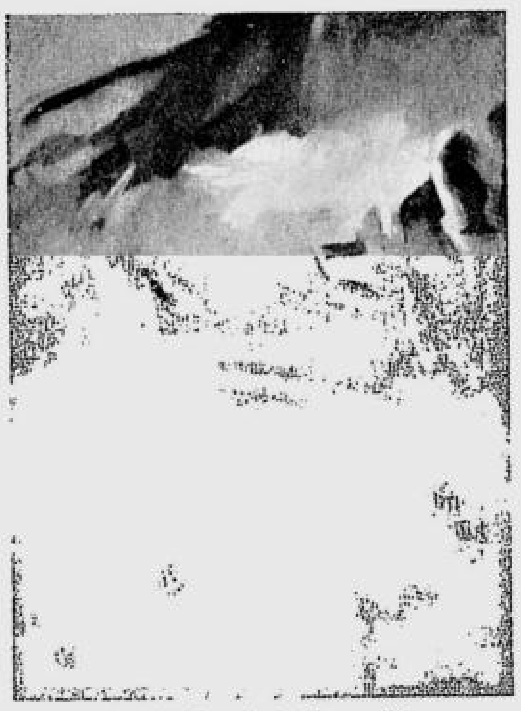
Bencab opened the event with a session on portrait drawing with charcoal. Best known for his expert use of watercolor to depict Filipino everyday life, Cacnio led participants in watercolor painting inspired by the lush landscape of the Greenbelt Park. In the third session, Borlongan, De Chavez, and Doctolero made use of oil pastel crayons to give life to inanimate objects.

Participants found themselves enriched by the experience of exploring their own creativity and learning new techniques.

Says Ayala Foundation president Victoria P. Garchitorena, "The workshop presents a good venue for people to come together to appreciate art and learn more about it by interacting with the country's prominent artists."

"An Affair with the Masters" is part of Ayala's 170th anniversary celebration which honors the Filipino through a fusion of various arts and culture, entertainment and social development projects.

"BREAKDOWN Analysis: Nature" 15


"BREAKDOWN Analysis: Nature" 1

Jemina Reyes' restful art at Astra

JEMINA Reyes with "Breakdown Analysis: Nature" 22

JEMINA Reyes invites us to get away from it all, loosen up and enjoy the best escape from life's hassles—art. In "Breakdown Analysis" at Galerie Astra, she landscapes as a sort of therapy for tired and restless souls.

Reyes has exhibited here and abroad. She trained in the United States.

In "Breakdown Analysis," Reyes portrays nature in flowing hues of solid colors.

The show opens on May 14 at 7 p.m. and runs until May 28. Galerie Astra is at LRI Building, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo), Makati City. Call 8903988, 7269015 or 7243032.

Sam Penaso at CCP

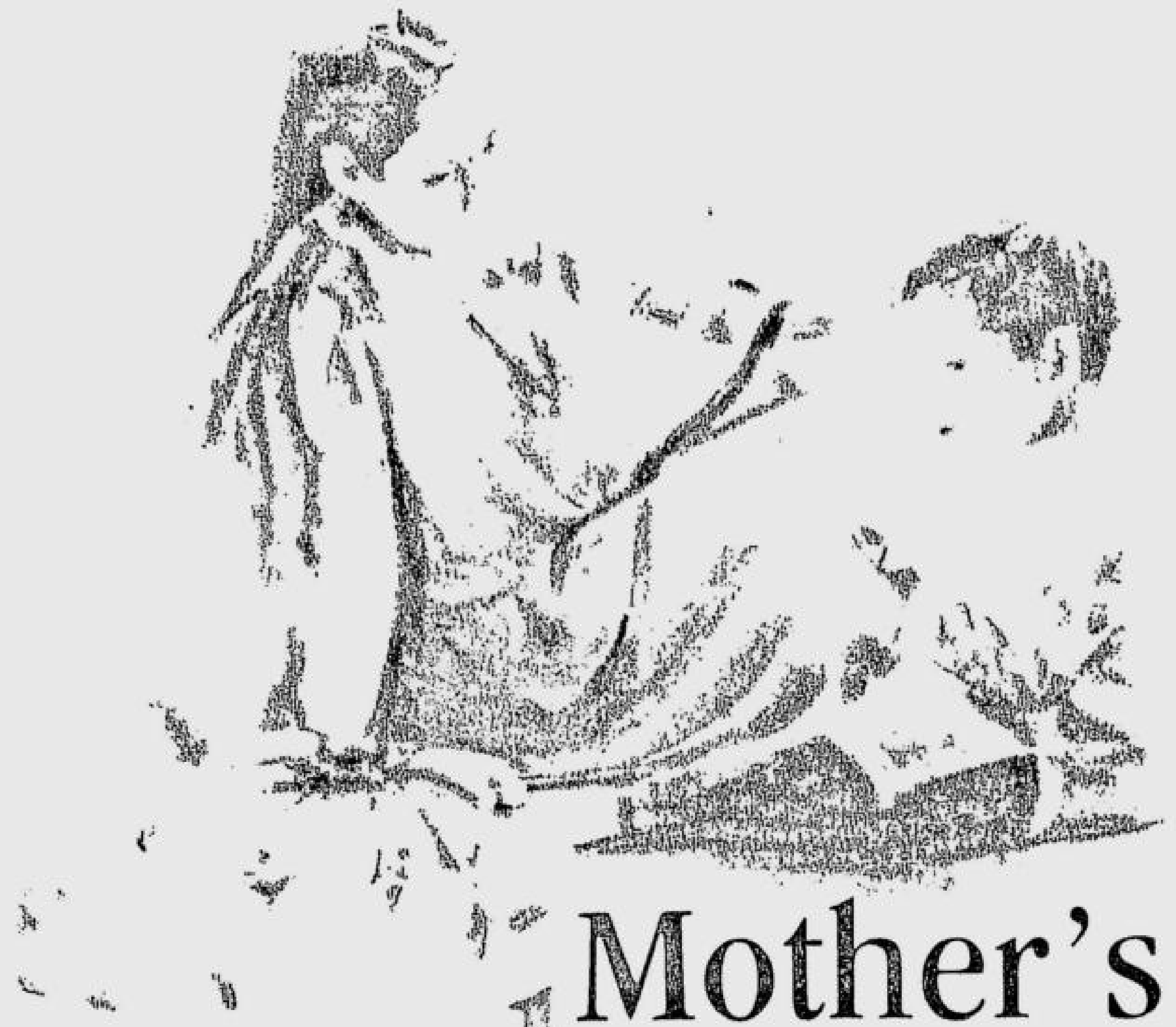
SAM Penaso addresses the dreadful phenomenon of death in his recent work entitled, "Rest in Peace" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Fourth Floor Hallway (Pasilyo Victorio Edades) until May 30.

It is natural for people to avoid visual, especially graphic, articulations of death. But to Sam Penaso, who lives near the La Loma Cemetery, death has practically become an everyday occurrence. "Life itself is not permanent after all, only memories and certain relics remain," Penaso says.

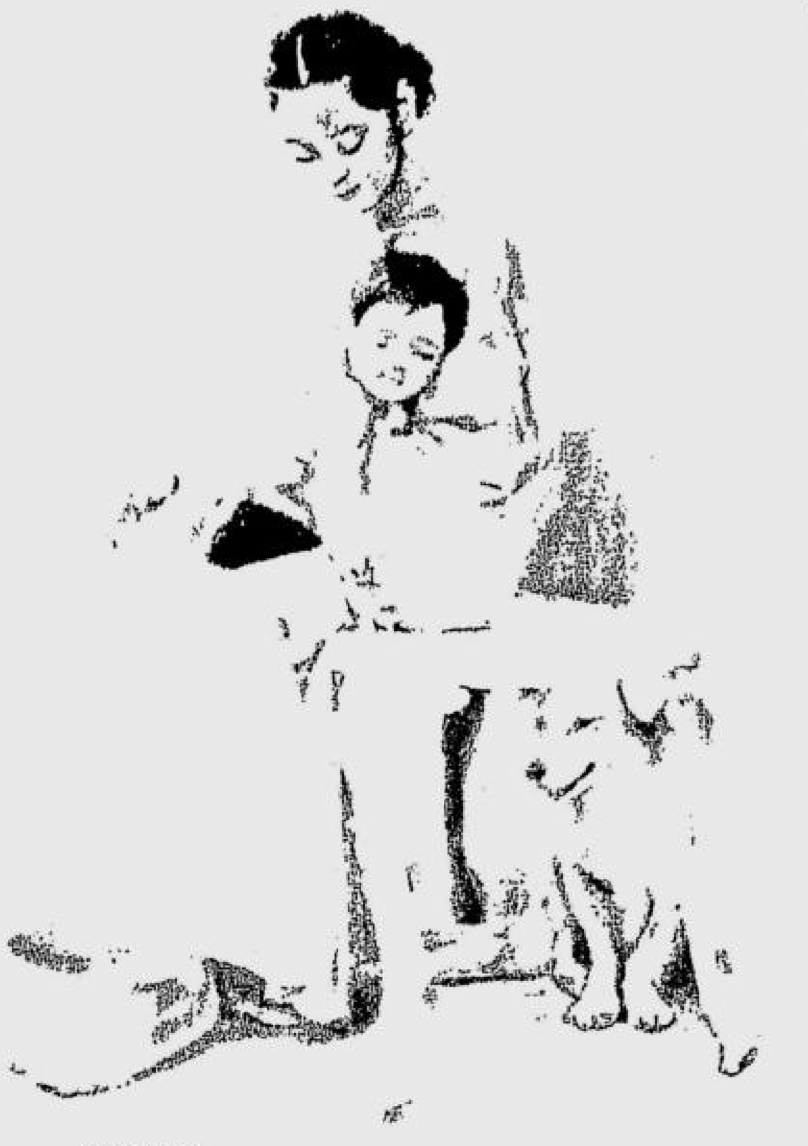
"Rest in Peace" features a series of framed photographs and digital prints of deceased individuals, including his parents, certain relatives and friends with a video installation to accompany the pictures.

CCP is located at Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Viewing hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Mondays. Admission is free. Call 8323702.

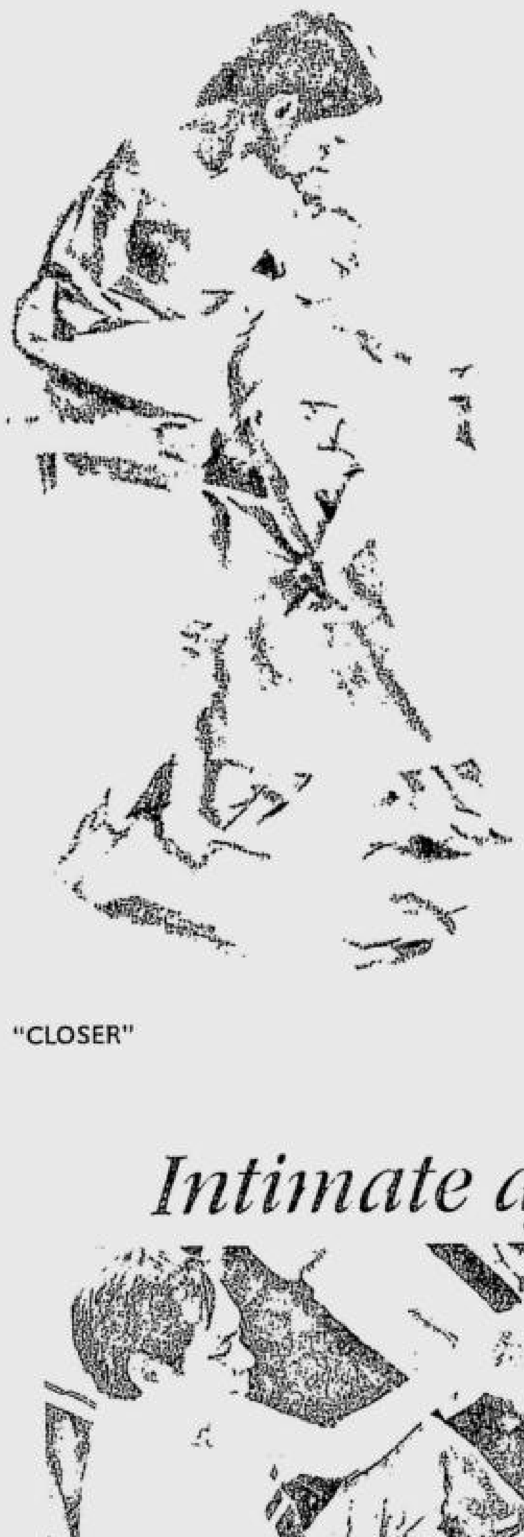
Mother's love as art



"NOURISH"



"FRIEND"



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For this second one-woman show, Young has decided to give part of the proceeds to fund the rehabilitation of the pediatrics ward of the Philippine General Hospital.

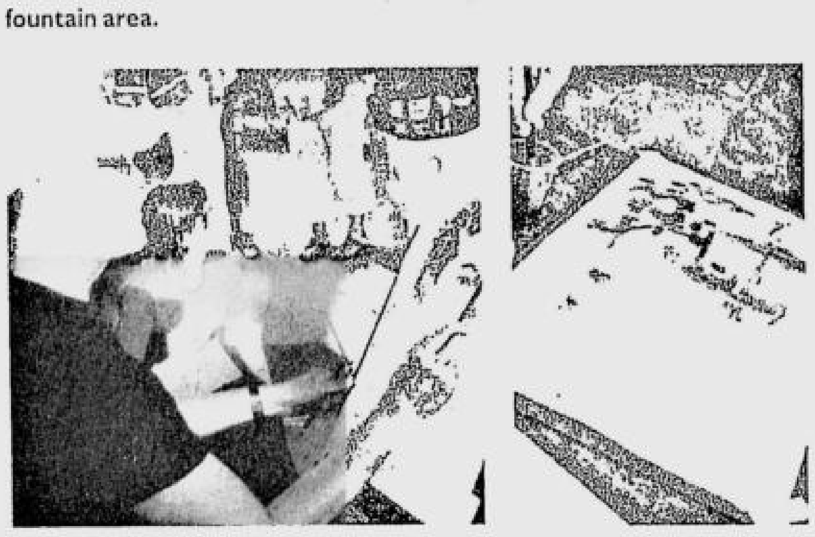
Being a mother herself, she knows the difficulties of having a sick child in the hospital. "The pediatrics ward at the PGH needs a lot of help. And when I was asked if I could help in the rehabilitation project, I thought of my own children then thought of the children at the PGH and so I willingly said yes."

Young says the show is a tribute to all mothers and to her own mother. "Love comes naturally for a mother. I was working much from my own memory, although I cannot really remember the exact moments from my childhood, I tried to bring that out in my work for this exhibit. Like they say, you cannot give what you do not have," she says.

And if we were to judge by Young's works at "Birthright," hers was a childhood filled with love, peace and grace—the same emotions that are evoked as one views her simple but heartwarming tribute to the woman whose love knows no bounds.

"Birthright" is running at Gallery 828 on the 4th level of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall until May 21.

Intimate affairs with artists



ANGEL Cacnio leads a watercolor painting session at Greenbelt 3 Park's fountain area.

TOP Filipino artists shared their talent and skill in a series of workshops at the Ayala Museum and Greenbelt Park.

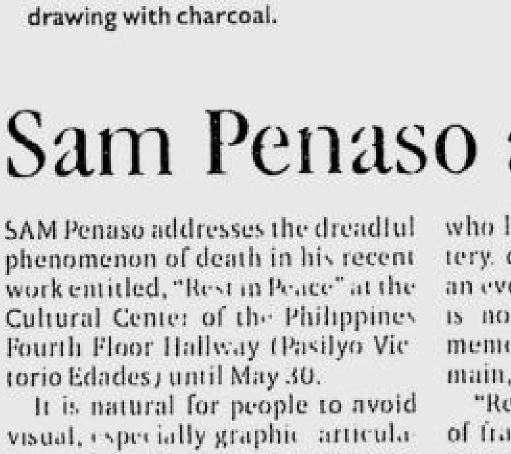
Dubbed "An Affair with the Masters," the art event drew people of all ages to spend Saturday afternoons learning from Ben Cabrera, noted watercolorist Angel Cacnio, and younger contemporary artists Elmer Borlongan, Leslie de Chavez and Ferdie Doctolero.

Bencab opened the event with a session on portrait drawing with charcoal. Best known for his expert use of watercolor to depict Filipino everyday life, Cacnio led participants in watercolor painting inspired by the lush landscape of the Greenbelt Park. In the third session, Borlongan, De Chavez, and Doctolero made use of oil pastel crayons to give life to inanimate objects.

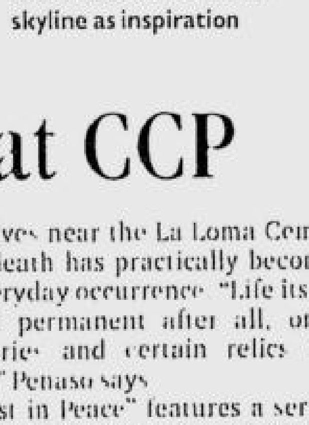
Participants found themselves enriched by the experience of exploring their own creativity and learning new techniques.

Says Ayala Foundation president Victoria P. Garchitorena, "The workshop presents a good venue for people to come together to appreciate art and learn more about it by interacting with the country's prominent artists."

"An Affair with the Masters" is part of Ayala's 170th anniversary celebration which honors the Filipino through a fusion of various arts and culture, entertainment and social development projects.



BENCAB opens "An Affair with the Masters" with a session on portrait drawing with charcoal.



CACNIO'S painting with the Greenbelt Park and skyline as inspiration

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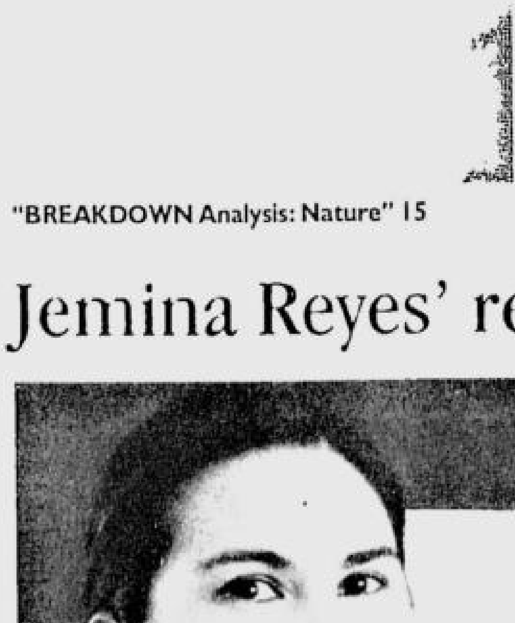
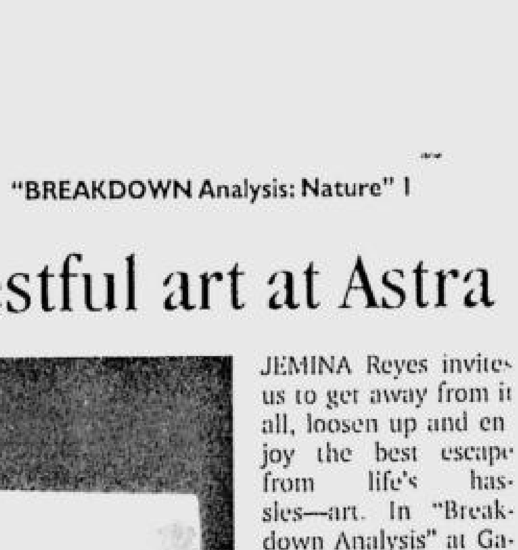


"BREAKDOWN Analysis: Nature" 15



"BREAKDOWN Analysis: Nature" 1

Jemina Reyes' restful art at Astra

JEMINA Reyes with "Breakdown Analysis: Nature" 22

JEMINA Reyes invites us to get away from it all, loosen up and enjoy the best escape from life's hassles—art. In "Breakdown Analysis" at Galerie Astra, she landscapes as a sort of therapy for tired and restless souls.

Reyes has exhibited here and abroad. She trained in the United States.

In "Breakdown Analysis," Reyes portrays nature in flowing hues of solid colors.

The show opens on May 14 at 7 p.m. and runs until May 28. Galerie Astra is at LFI Building, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo), Makati City. Call 8903988, 7269015 or 7243032.

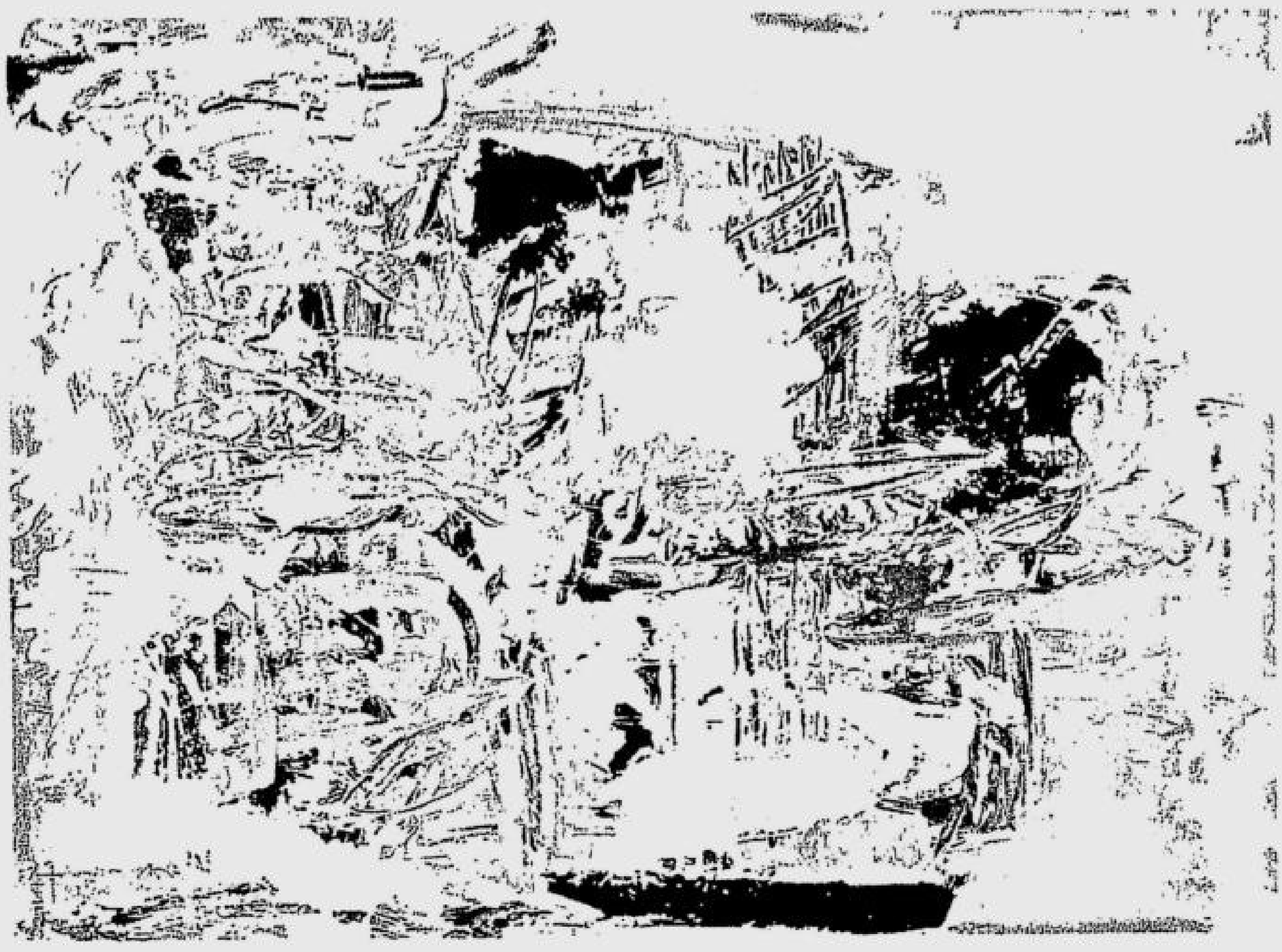
Sam Penaso at CCP

SAM Penaso addresses the dreadful phenomenon of death in his recent work entitled, "Rest in Peace" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Fourth Floor Hallway (Pasilyo Victorio Edades) until May 30.

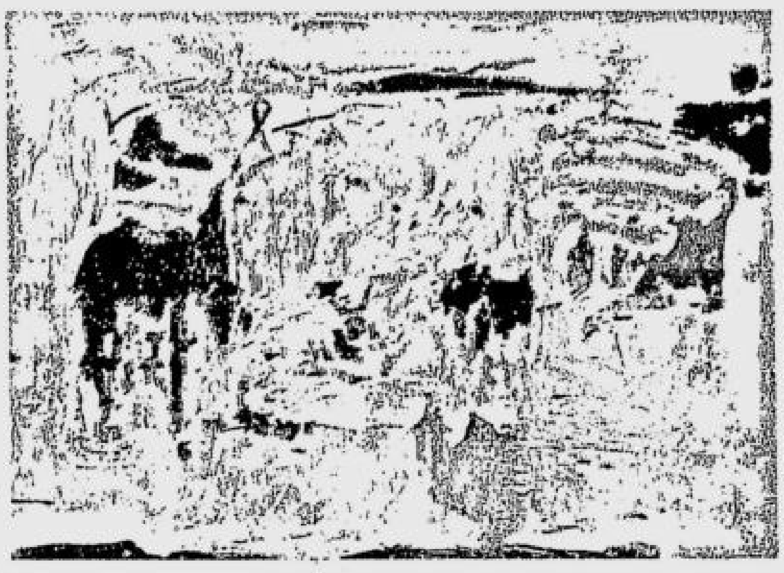
It is natural for people to avoid visual, especially graphic articulations of death. But to Sam Penaso, who lives near the La Loma Cemetery, death has practically become an everyday occurrence. "Life itself is not permanent after all, only memories and certain relics remain," Penaso says.

"Rest in Peace" features a series of framed photographs and digital prints of deceased individuals, including his parents, certain relatives and friends with a video installation to accompany the pictures.

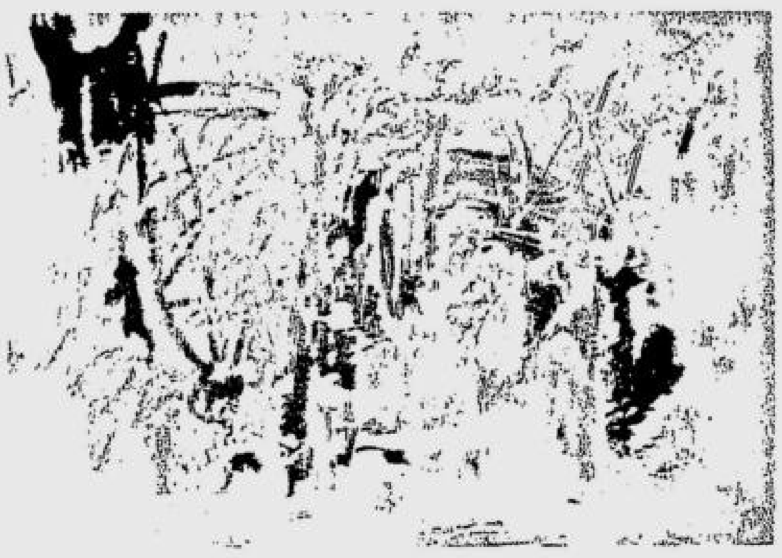
CCP is located at Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Viewing hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Mondays. Admission is free. Call 8323702.



"HEART of Darkness"



"ENDLESS Night"



"SERENADE to Van Gogh"

Champion of the abstract

CID Reyes

By Constantino C. Tejero

CID Reyes went into full-time art-making only five years ago, but since he holds exhibits regularly (two shows a year), it is likely that soon he would be known more as artist than art critic.

Reyes and Rod. Paras-Perez must be the only artist-critics practicing in the country today, that is, the only ones of their kind with "bodies of works to support their claim of being artists." And they've received critical acceptance, too.

"It is important that I win the acceptance of the artists' community," says Reyes. "These are two different breeds. As artist, you divest yourself of your critical faculties. You just trust your instinct."

That kind of instinct, specifically automatism, characterizes "White Nights: Visions of an Insomniac," his recent exhibit of 19 pieces in acrylic on canvas and on paper in West Gallery at the Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

A series of highly textured, predominantly white paintings streaked with color (red, orange, yellow, blue-green, pink, gold, ochre, maroon, black, gray), this would seem an extension of Reyes' homage to artists last year.

"They're artists whose works are essentially concerned with light, such as Rothko, VanGogh, even Fernando Zobel," he explains. "My background is in art history, so homages are almost imperative."

Exaggerated textures

In fact, two of the paintings in this exhibit are titled "Homage to Zao Wou-Ki."

"He's a Chinese painter who belongs to the School of Paris," says Reyes. "I really admire his work because he's able to combine Abstract Expressionism with an Orientalist mode and tone. His scale is always massive, his canvases very, very huge. He works in the New York style of Action Painting."

Working on a much smaller canvas for his homage, Reyes just approximates by scale the sense of vast space, streaking the white plane with pure red and tinges of gray, yellow and pink.

"The focus is on darkness and light," he explains. "It is light emanating from a shroud of black, shimmering."

The diptych is the most textured of the pieces, using automotive putty to create canals, ridges, interstices—they're really reliefs.

"I'm working with exaggerated textures," he says. "Some use texture as decorative. I explore it as an element of painting, or as a language on its own."

Aside from impasto, he also uses pebbles and sand for a gravely effect, such as in the series "Dazzled by Light" 1-3. This one, he acknowledges, resembles the calligraphic paintings of Mark Tobey.

Favorite artists include Sam Francis, Helen Frankenthaler, José Joya, Lee Aguinaldo, Zao Wou-Ki.

"Theirs are works that really move me," says Reyes. "They're my great influences. Of course, there's a difference between influence and parody."

Essence in the color

A graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from De La Salle University, Reyes studied painting at the Academia di Belle Arti in Rome. He later took up art history in Citylit Institute at Covent Garden in London.

"The figurative is a discipline you have to go through," he says. "I've never worked in that style—never in the conventional—only still life. After that, I jumped to abstraction. I never even went through Pop Art, the Conceptual, and such. It has always been Abstract Expressionism.

"Well, I've done geometric abstraction, after Frank Stella. But I've come to dislike it because it's something that is planned. You make a small blueprint and then blow it up to a large scale. You correct your mistake—when the color is not balanced, or the form is topsy-turvy. There's no sense of surprise, it's not spontaneous, and art becomes perfunctory."

The artistic act he is passionate about can be seen in such a work as "Waiting for the Sun." On this can very well be applied what one critic rhapsodizes about a Sam Francis work: "While no reference to the real world can be seen, it captures a particular feeling, movement and atmosphere."

The essence, you see, is in the color. Those streaks of ochre, orange and red are obviously hinting at the coming of the rosy-fingered Dawn.

Or look at "Ella Fitzgerald at 3 A.M." Here you'll see only streaks of red, orange and yellow on a white plane, yet on another plane it captures the mood or feeling of an insomniac listening to jazz toward morning.

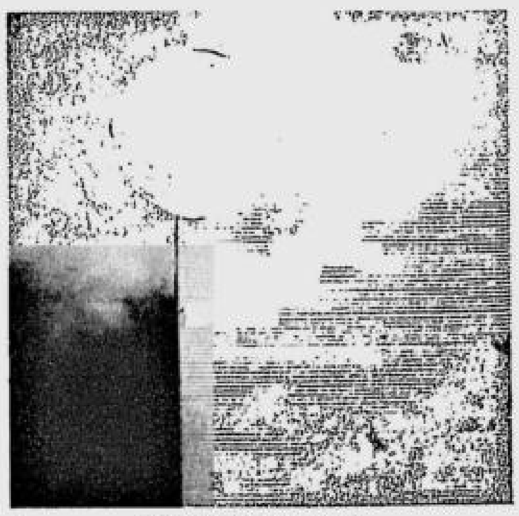
Bridging the artistic divide

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

Only time will tell if Carlo Magno's transformation from realist to abstractionist will prove more lasting and rewarding

THAT an artist in the person of Carlo Magno, who has for decades worked in, and been identified with, the Realist School but has now turned to pure abstraction, may prove disconcerting to most people, especially his avid followers.

But given the prevailing mindset of the visual arts in this country, coupled with the attendant mood swings that spur some artists to conveniently shift their allegiances, this all boils down to a larger scenario that enables art players, ambidextrous as they are, to reinvent and repackage themselves when the times so dictate it.



"SILENT Harmony"

Magno (surnamed Tsiausas), who is heretofore better known for his faithful depiction of ancestral homes and cathedrals, their cavernous interiors and sprawling gardens—indeed, emblematic of his generation's overarching nostalgia for things past—has finally decided to cut off the umbilical cord that bound him to the profligacy of the commercial art circuit.

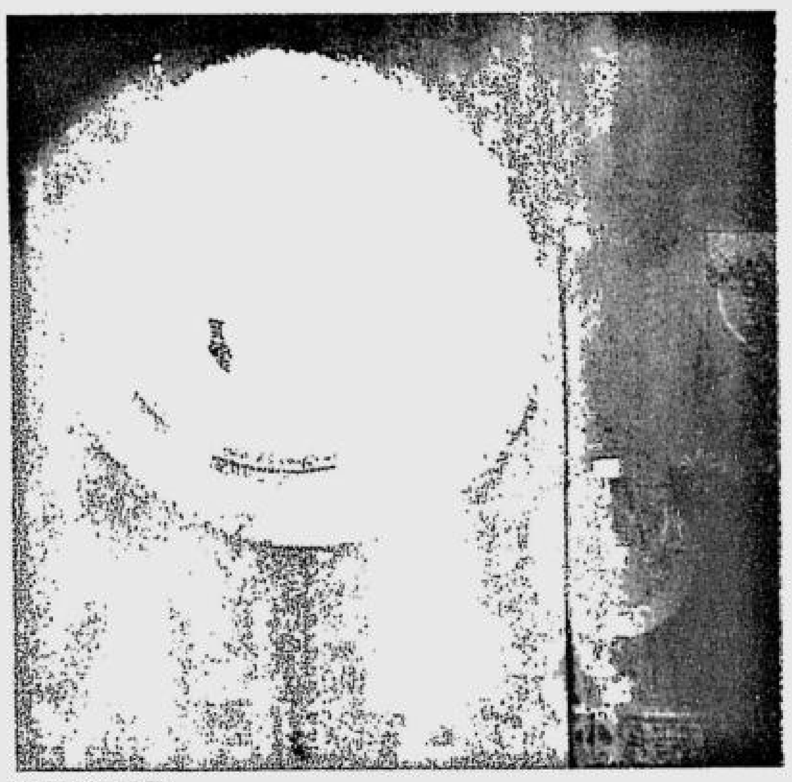
Transformation

His transformation may have begun just over a year ago, when he first mounted large-scale abstract pieces in luminous red hues with gestural brushstrokes that allude to the aesthetics of the controlled accident.

In the show aptly dubbed "Transformation," the artist reveled in strong and bold textures, intense light sources, incorporating elements of Oriental abstractionism, such as calligraphy and the materiality of his medium.

Now, in a follow-up show titled "Higher Ground," in Galerie Joaquin, 2/F, 371 P. Guevarra St. cor. Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan (until May 16), Magno mounts an even bigger show consisting of over 40 paintings in mixed media and half-dozen sculptures in stainless steel.

Compared to his previous works, the new pieces are decidedly more restrained and spare in character, their colors and compositions in generally more somber, introspective tones, and are relatively understated in the feelings they evoke.



"ETERNITY"

"JOYOUS Kingdom"

Though red still makes a dominant hue in the show, it is evenly tempered with more neutral shades of gray, metallic copper and bronze, and daubs of black. The pictorial field is replete with textural pointillist shadings of grains from sand, enhanced by undulating horizontal lines as well as curvilinear forms from a large orb.

Magno, a new convert to Abstract Expressionism, is enamored with the role of accident in his compositions, and falls prey to the lure of textural play and visual one-upmanship.

The works bear the obvious influence of Gus Albor and Lito Carating, at least in the manner the interplay of geometric forms such as circles and squares and the multi-layered brushwork is judiciously worked out.

But the comparison ends there, as Magno seems more concerned with the disparate elements at work than with the feelings the oeuvre evokes in the viewer. Though a number of his works have a multi-planar reality with sharp gashes and lines, the disjointed elements tend to coalesce in the final reckoning on the canvas.

Staggering output

The artist's output is equally staggering in number, and so multitudinous, in fact, are the pieces that a number of the works are made to hang at the stairways and on every available wall of the gallery.

I am told the artist, in the wake of his successful show last year, is determined to recover lost ground, having been caught in the crossroads between realism and abstraction, and ultimately deciding to take the path that affords him greater artistic freedom to experiment and innovate.

There are also the sculptures, actually trophy-high pieces with an assortment of abstract images purveyed. Though relatively small in size (they are intended to be placed on tabletops or pedestals), these pieces exude a strong presence in their graceful form and unadorned simplicity.

The orb in the paintings is echoed in a piece called "Emerging Orb." The theme of nature's rebirth and awakening is conjured in "Kapuso," with its symbolical arc. "Calla Lily" is obviously inspired by the shape of the tropical plant.

With this show, Magno has made a daring though highly calculated move to bridge the divide that distinguishes his past identity and the present direction his art has taken. The result may not be a real breakthrough as originally planned, but no one can dispute the fact that it takes more than guts and gumption to make art work.

Only time will tell if the realist-turned-abstractionist can sustain this latest caper into something more lasting and rewarding.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

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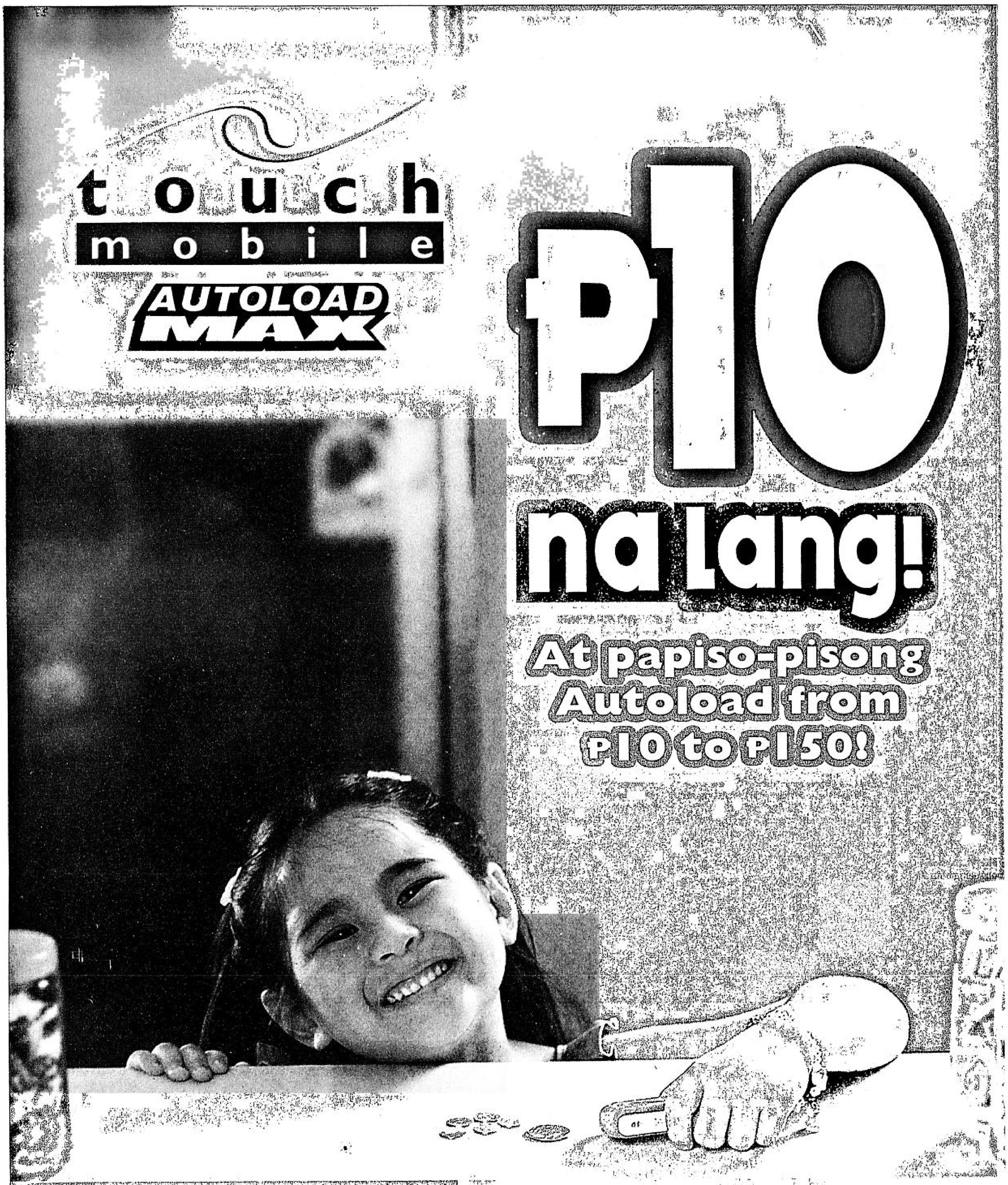
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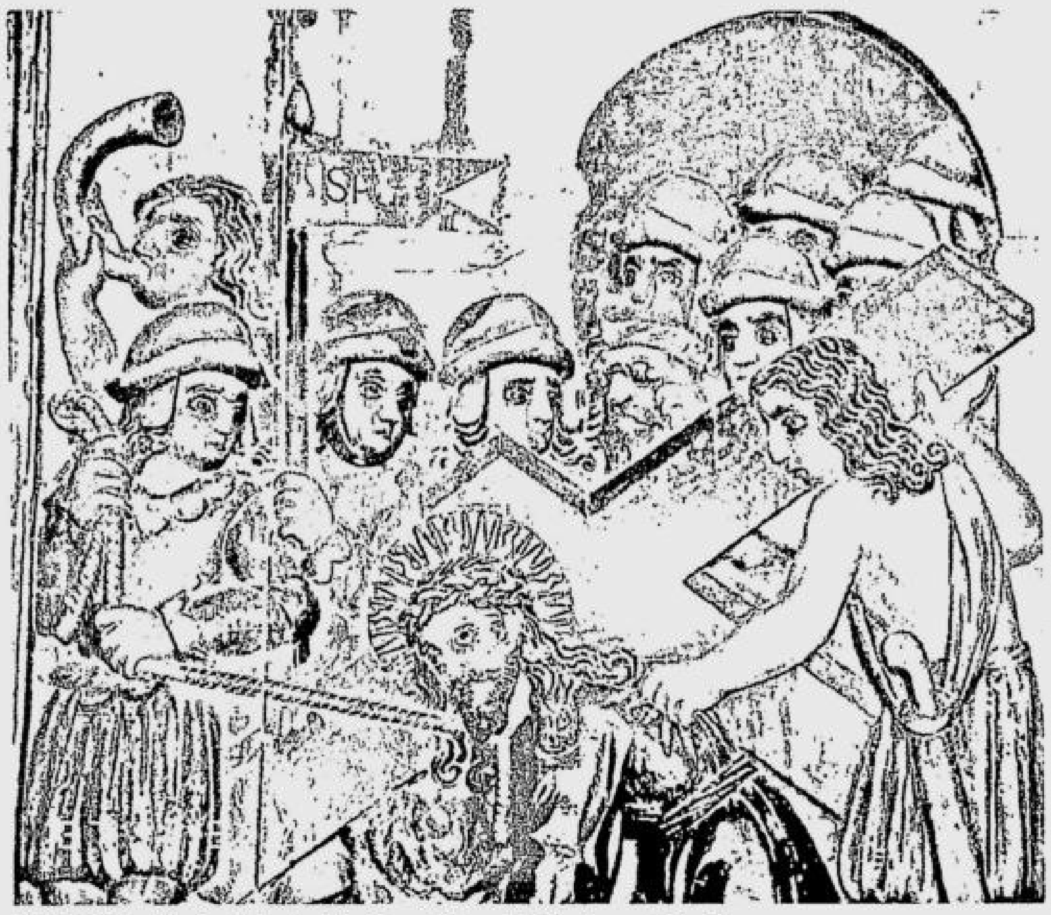
TRYING out the *duyans* in the middle of the road between Laguna and Rizal. "Handicrafts-hunting" is a must for tourists, local or foreign.

I dream of our old towns, like Pila, coming alive, filled with young people enjoying sidewalk cafés, little galleries, concerts, craft bazaars and open markets



THE MAN with the "shades" in Tanay Church's Stations of the Cross

The rewards of a lake

ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

GOD rewards those who rise early." There is certainly truth to that old Spanish saying. We had all gotten up at dawn to join a tour of Laguna de Bay, our country's largest lake. We are confused about its name. We call it Lake Laguna or even Laguna Bay. Laguna means "lake" or "lagoon" in Spanish. So Laguna Lake is really "lake-lake." Sounds obscene doesn't it! Then again how can something be a lake and a bay at the same time?

The lake takes its name from the town of Bay (pronounced Ba-e). This was one of the former capitals of Laguna province. Our tour would take us all around the lakeshore from the Rizal side to the Laguna side. Our early risers' reward would be no less than the incredible view of Laguna de Bay in the morning light. The grey wash of the distant hills contrasted with the dark shades of the nearly cliffs and the shimmering water. What a sight!

Wonderfully, the day had many other rewards in store. First stop was the San Geronimo Church in Morong. We could see its white shape

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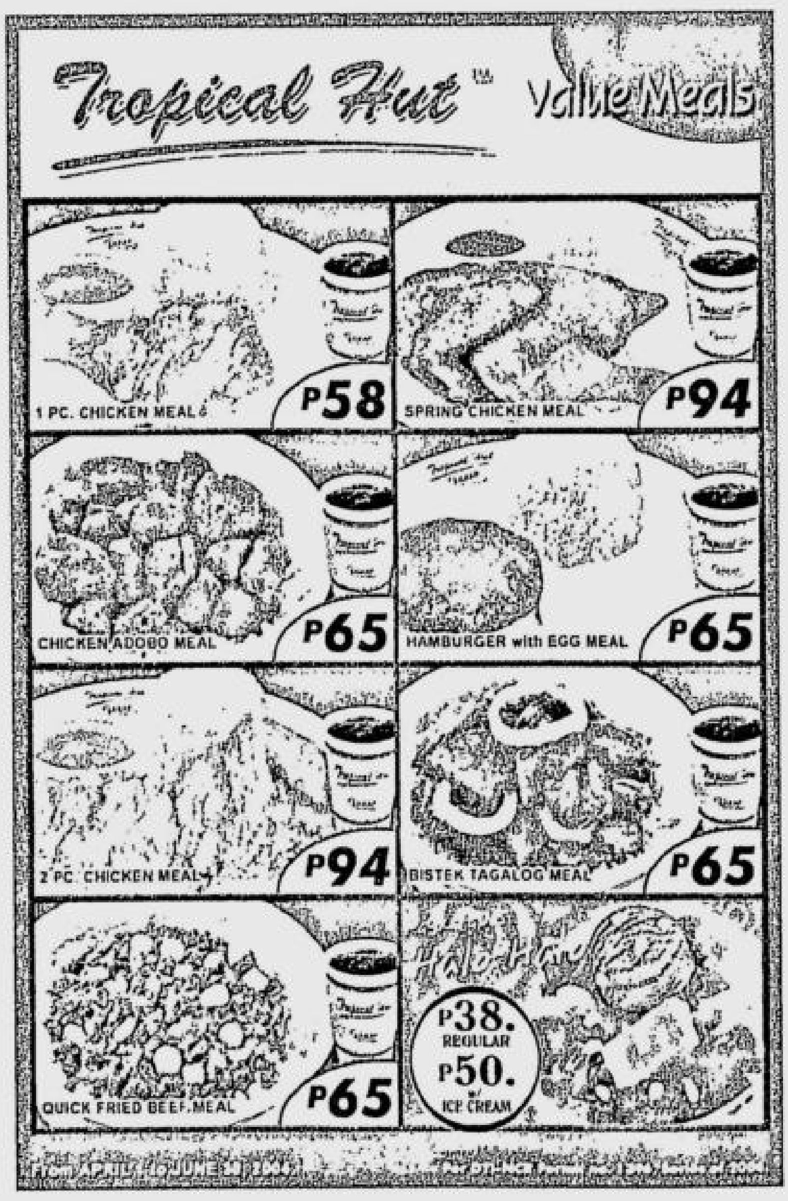
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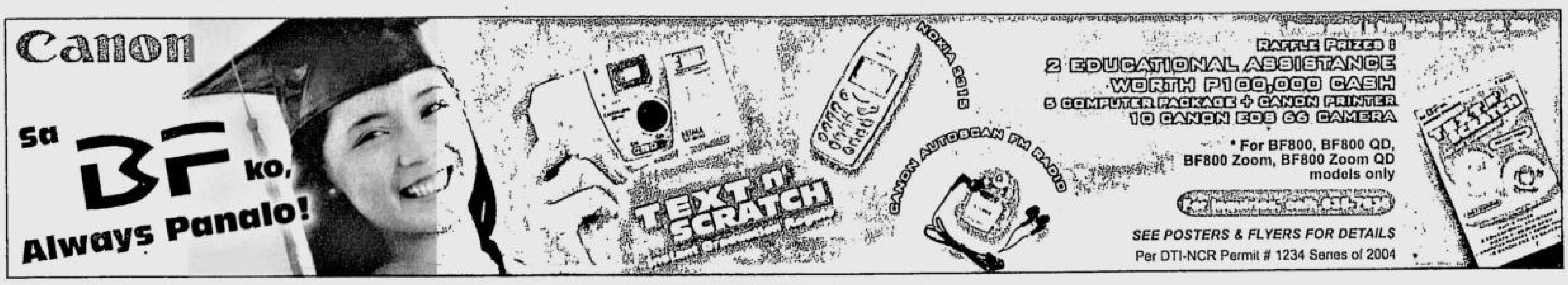
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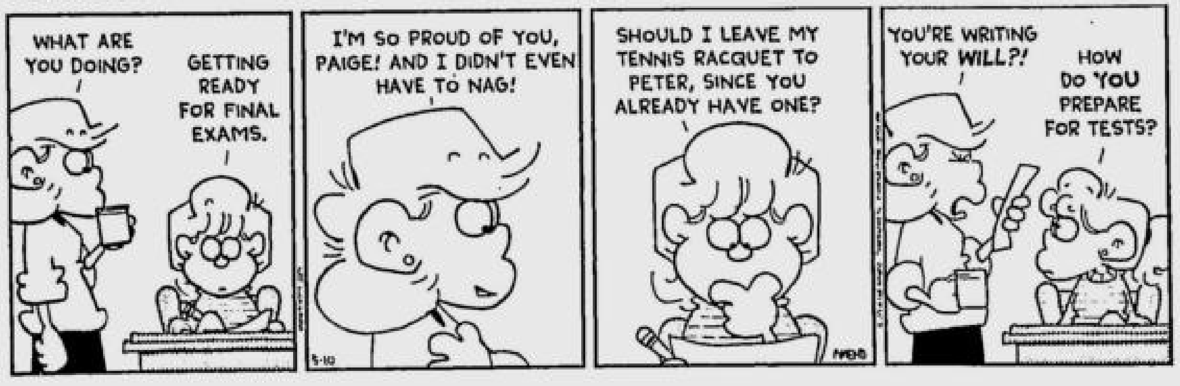
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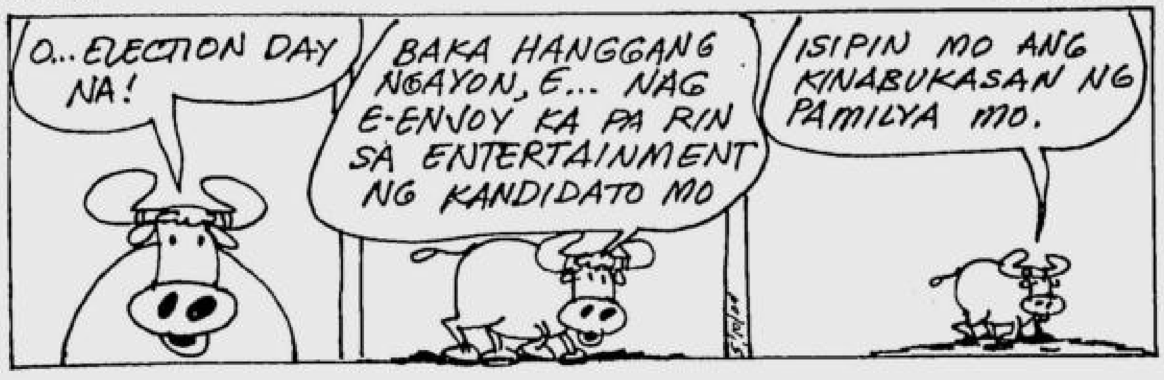
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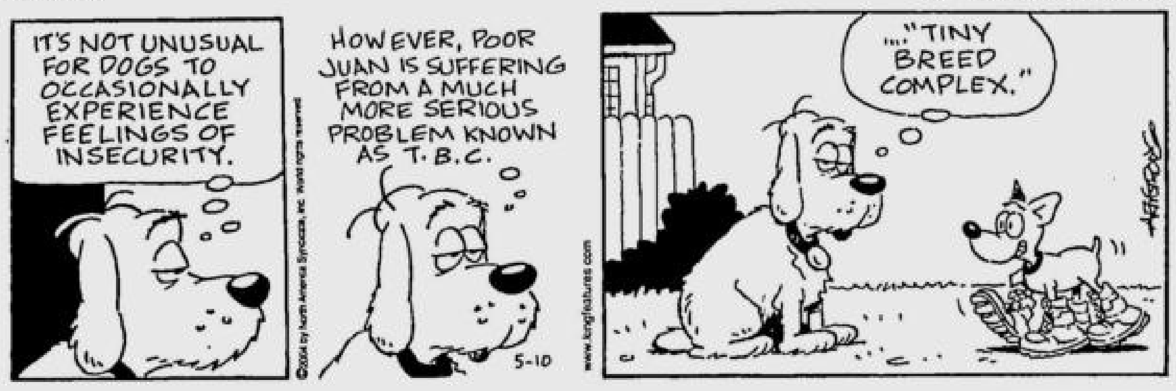
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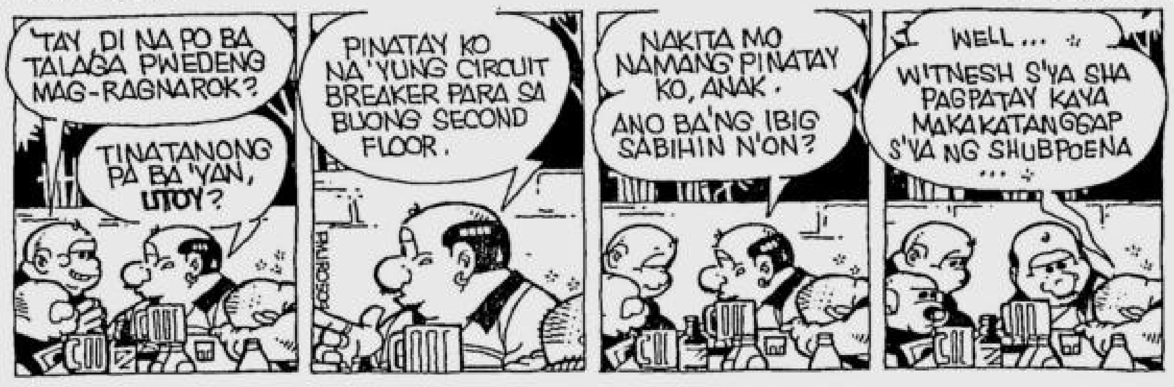
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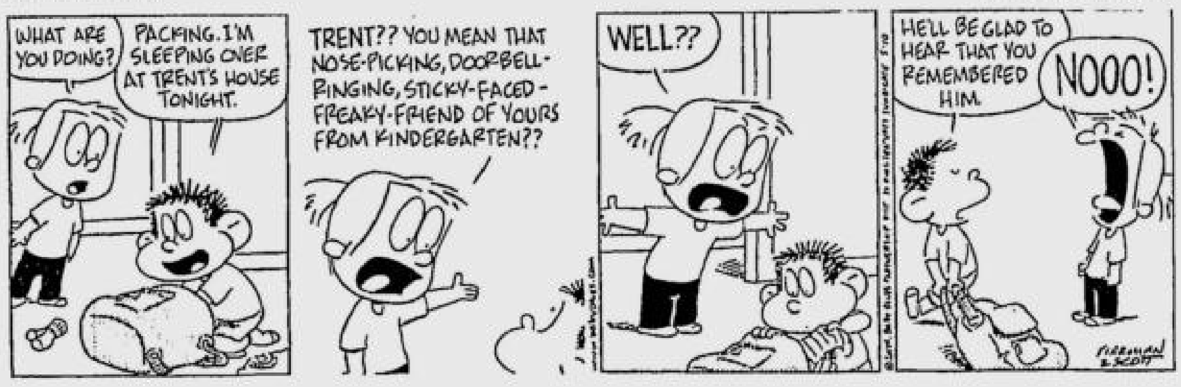
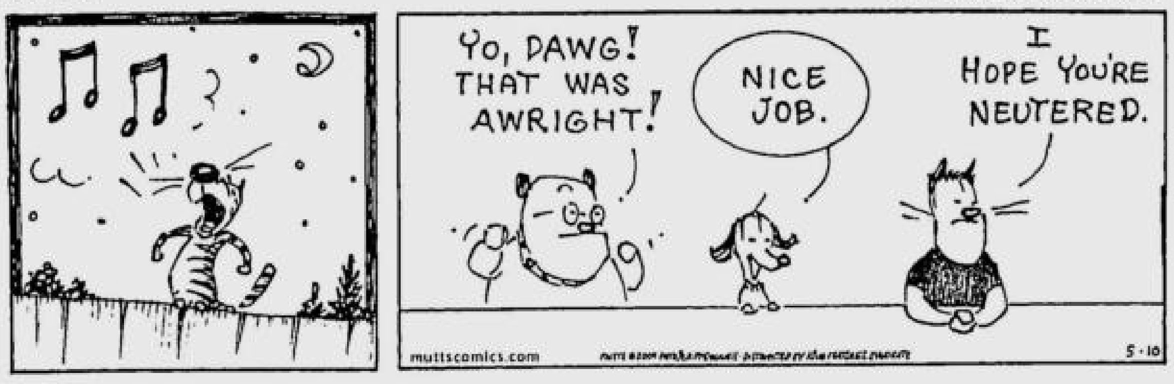
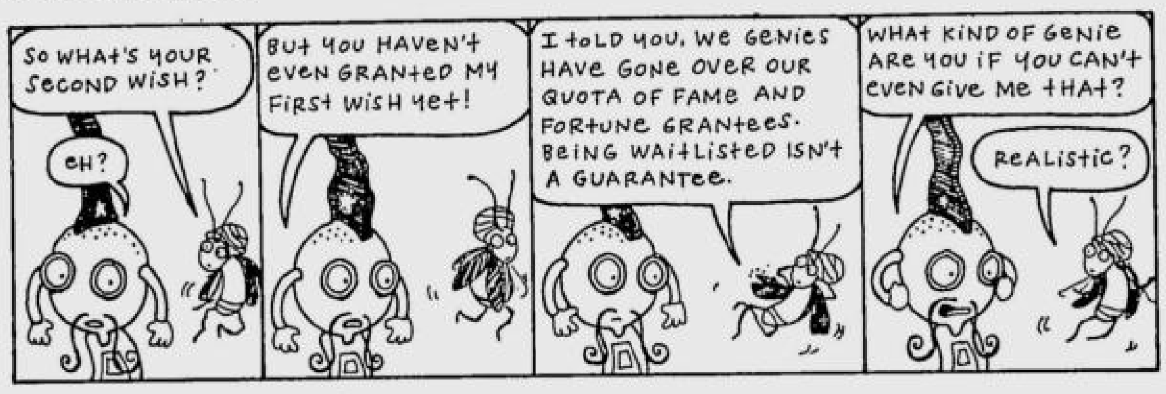
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PACKING. I'M SLEEPING OVER AT TRENT'S HOUSE TONIGHT.
TRENT?? YOU MEAN THAT NOSE-PICKING, DOORBELL-RINGING, STICKY-FACED-FREAKY-FRIEND OF YOURS FROM KINDERGARTEN??
WELL??
HE'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR THAT YOU REMEMBERED HIM.
NOOO!

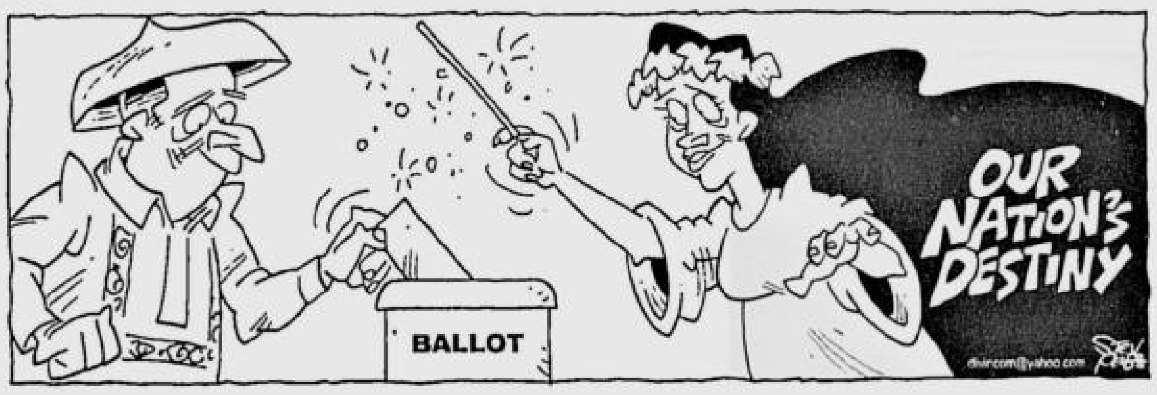
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


YO, DAWG! THAT WAS AWRIGHT!
NICE JOB.
I HOPE YOU'RE NEUTERED.
muttscomics.com
5·10

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO WHAT'S YOUR SECOND WISH?
EH?
BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN GRANTED MY FIRST WISH YET!
I TOLD YOU. WE GENIES HAVE GONE OVER OUR QUOTA OF FAME AND FORTUNE GRANTEES. BEING WAITLISTED ISN'T A GUARANTEE.
WHAT KIND OF GENIE ARE YOU IF YOU CAN'T EVEN GIVE ME THAT?
REALISTIC?

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


OUR NATION'S DESTINY
BALLOT
divicom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're definitely in touch with music and rhythm. You're also very active and daring. You rely on your intuition, and this makes you successful. You often teach whatever you learn. (And you will learn, because you like to blaze new trails.) You are highly gifted. Think carefully, because important choices will be presented to you this year.
Birthdate of: Phil and Steve Mahre, twin World Cup skiers; Fred Astaire, dancer/actor: Judith Jamison, dancer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): There's a smile in your words today. In fact, today is the perfect day to tell someone that you love him or her. (We take our daily contacts for granted, but they need to know we care!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In an absent-minded way, you might have some excellent moneymaking ideas today. Don't dismiss them. Write them down for future consideration.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a lovely day to enjoy the company of a friend, or even a group. You feel warmhearted toward others, plus you're in the mood for a little easygoing chitchat.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to talk your boss. Whatever is discussed might ultimately end up boosting your income in some way in the future. It certainly won't hurt it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have a strong appreciation of intellectual ideas today. Seek out the company of bright, energetic people who have opinions about philosophy, religion and world politics.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone might give you a tip about how to use something to your best advantage today. You'll discover you had a little jewel in your own back yard!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because you appreciate art today, surround yourself with as much beauty as possible. Go to a park or a gallery. Visit beautiful shops.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): If you can take today off, by all means do so. You need to relax and enjoy the beauty of your surroundings. You feel laid-back, mellow and easygoing.

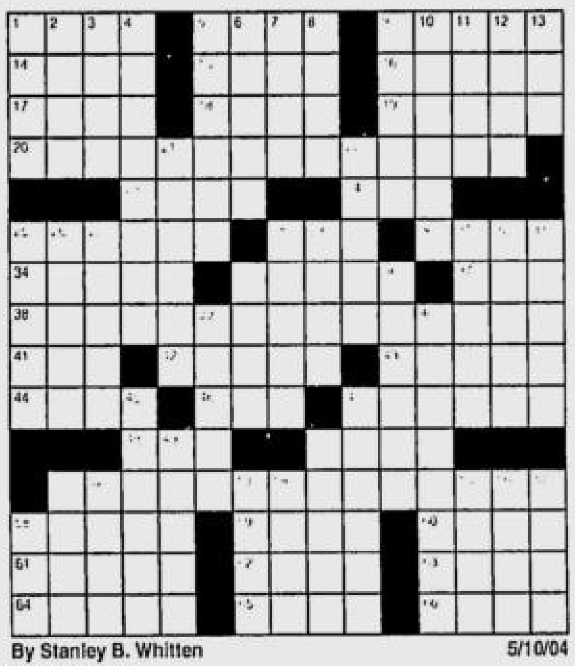
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Love and romance promise sweet, flirtatious times for you today. Make sure you treat yourself to some playful moments with friends or even with children. Lighten up and enjoy your day.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be helpful to family members today. There's a lovely opportunity for mutual admiration and mutual benefit within your domestic world now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today you might be able to verbalize feelings that you normally hide. (Life is too short to play it safe in matters of the heart.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You'll love shopping for goodies for your home or for family members today. In particular, you want to buy beautiful things. You might even want to indulge in your constant pleasure—shoes!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
5/10/04

ACROSS
1 Partner of circumstance
5 Russian ruler
9 Texas A&M student
14 Morales of "N.Y.P.D. Blue"
15 Las Vegas rival
16 Mends by reweaving
17 Greenspan or Ladd
18 Invites
19 Property attachments
20 Frodo's story with "The"
23 Pretentiously creative
24 Justice Fortas
25 Off course
28 Stern's opposite
30 6/6/44 remembrance
34 Follower of Zeno
35 Put off
37 Lyric poem
38 One's cronies
41 Appropriate
42 New York Bay island
43 Tippy vessel
44 Mexican coin
46 Final: abbr.
47 Wailing warnings
48 Angler's need
50 Breathe heavily
51 Sweet treat
58 Bird droppings
59 Keep in check
60 Farrell or Ditka
61 True up
62 Arm bone
63 Top guns
64 Shopping frenzy
65 Wagers
66 Twiggy home

DOWN
1 Thunder sound
2 Norway capital
3 Volcanic crater
4 Like a lyric poem, perhaps
5 Clever
6 Full of tang
7 Egyptian cross
8 Fragrant bloom
9 Extemporize
10 Put on a few pounds
11 Kinnear or Maddux
12 Hostels
13 Back-and-forth curve
21 Mythic consultant
22 More crude
25 Music rights grp.
26 R.E.M. singer Michael
27 Wrongful acts
28 Be suitable for
29 Switch positions
31 "Divine Poems" poet
32 Afterthought
33 Affirmatives
35 Barbie or Ken
36 Using an extrusion gadget
39 Give the slip to
40 Human
45 Satsuma, e.g.
47 Finnish baths
49 Threatened layer
50 Tapered end
51 Swallow rapidly
52 Den
53 Defeat decisively
54 Text-removal directive
55 Pleasant
56 Hawaiian guitars
57 Dry run
58 Ford fuel

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	R	I	F	E	■	C	H	I	P	P	E	W	A
A	R	E	T	E	S	■	D	E	M	E	A	N	E	D
R	O	D	E	N	T	■	R	E	P	R	I	S	E	D
G	U	S	■	C	A	R	O	L	■	S	N	I	D	E
A	N	T	I	E	T	A	M	■	T	O	I	L	E	R
S	C	A	L	D	E	D	■	R	U	N	N	E	R	S
S	E	R	F	■	■	I	C	E	B	A	G	■	■	■
O	S	S	■	C	L	A	U	S	E	S	■	P	E	R
■	■	■	G	H	E	T	T	O	■	■	T	A	X	A
H	O	T	L	I	N	E	■	L	O	B	U	L	A	R
U	S	H	E	R	S	■	M	E	A	L	T	I	M	E
S	T	E	E	P	■	T	A	S	T	Y	■	S	I	N
T	E	R	M	I	T	E	S	■	E	T	H	A	N	E
L	A	M	E	N	E	S	S	■	R	H	O	D	E	S
E	L	O	N	G	A	T	E	■	S	E	D	E	R	S

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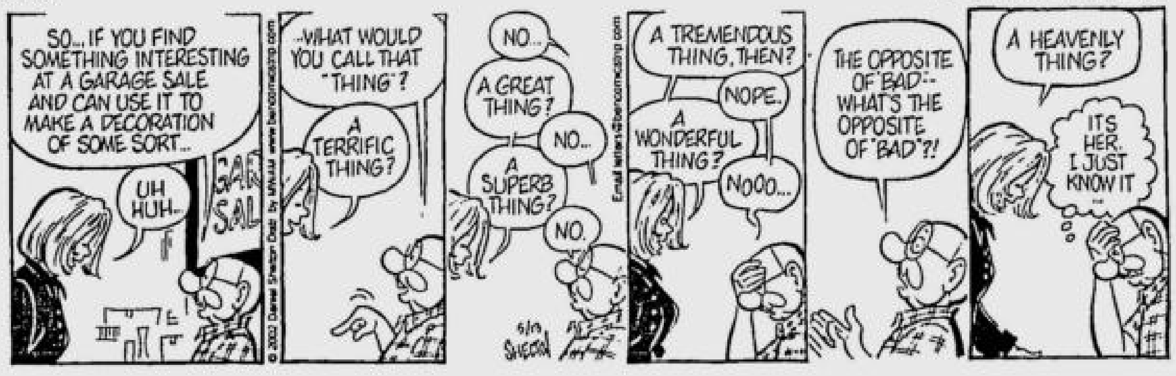
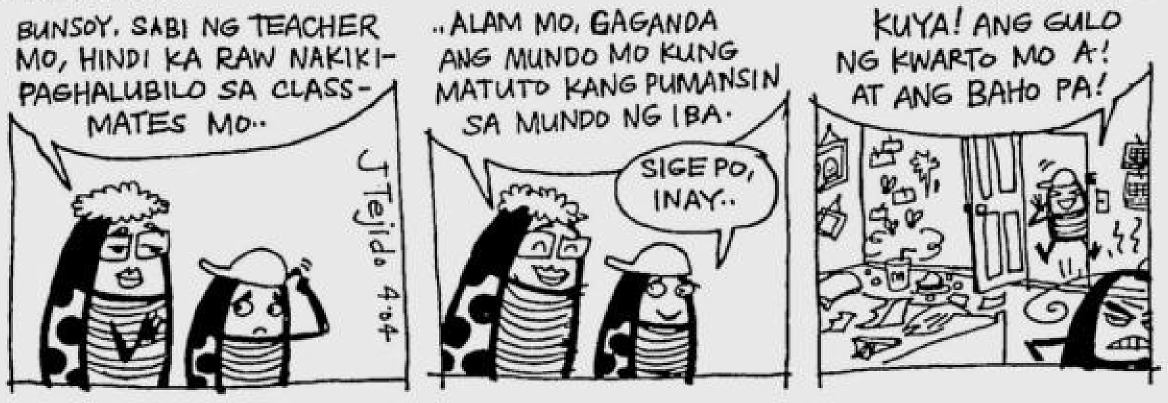
5/10/04

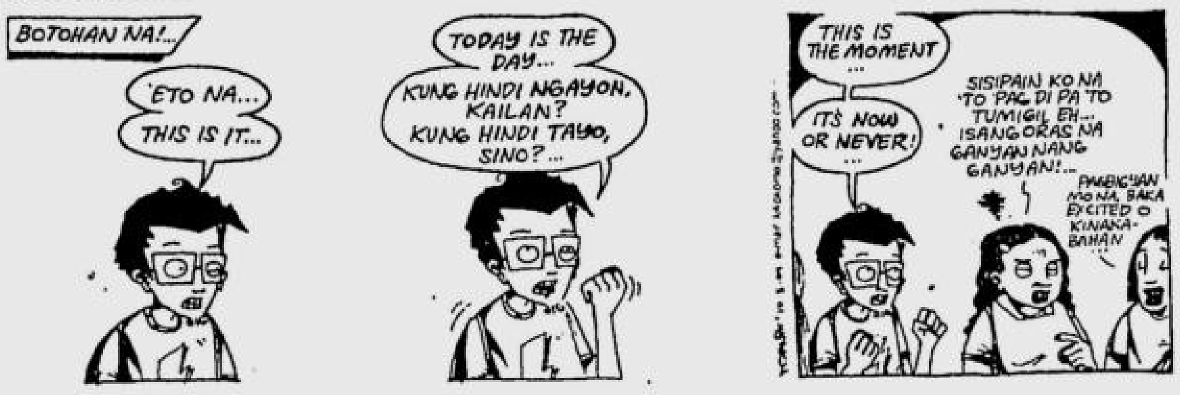
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO... IF YOU FIND SOMETHING INTERESTING AT A GARAGE SALE AND CAN USE IT TO MAKE A DECORATION OF SOME SORT...
UH HUH...
GARAGE SALE
...WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THAT "THING"?
A TERRIFIC THING?
NO...
A GREAT THING?
NO...
A SUPERB THING?
NO.
A TREMENDOUS THING, THEN?
NOPE.
A WONDERFUL THING?
NOOO...
THE OPPOSITE OF "BAD"-- WHAT'S THE OPPOSITE OF "BAD"?!
A HEAVENLY THING?
ITS HER. I JUST KNOW IT ...

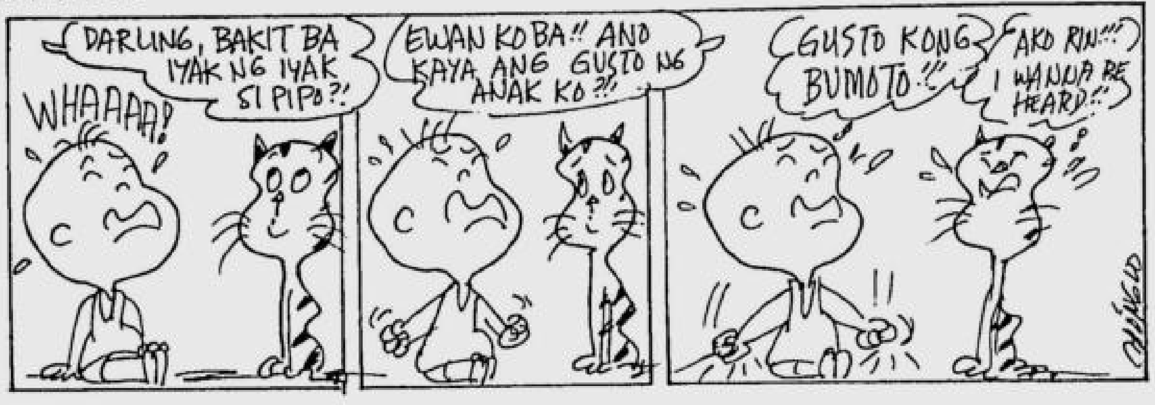
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, SABI NG TEACHER MO, HINDI KA RAW NAKIKI-PAGHALUBILO SA CLASS-MATES MO..
J Tejido 4·04
..ALAM MO, GAGANDA ANG MUNDO MO KUNG MATUTO KANG PUMANSIN SA MUNDO NG IBA.
SIGE PO, INAY..
KUYA! ANG GULO NG KWARTO MO A! AT ANG BAHO PA!

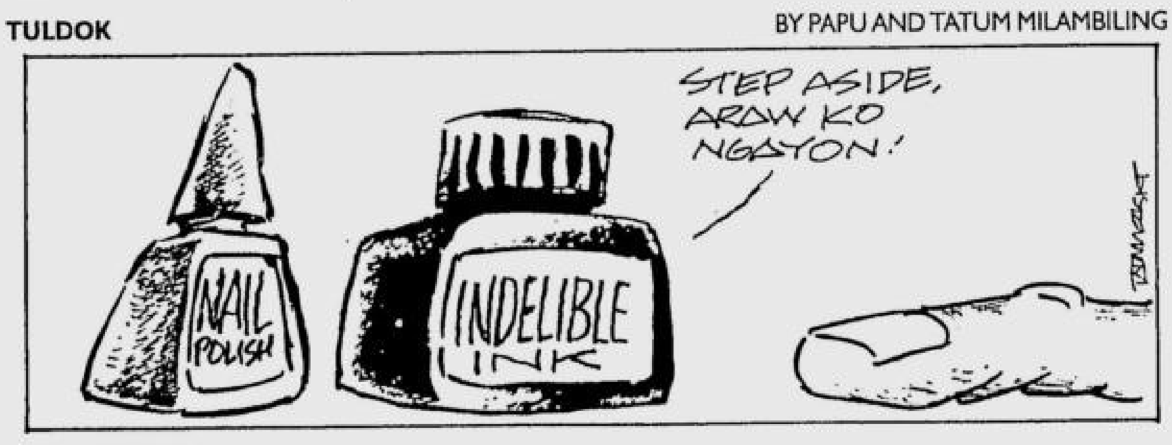
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


BOTOHAN NA!...
'ETO NA... THIS IS IT...
TODAY IS THE DAY...
KUNG HINDI NGAYON, KAILAN? KUNG HINDI TAYO, SINO?...
THIS IS THE MOMENT ...
IT'S NOW OR NEVER! ...
SISIPAIN KO NA 'TO 'PAG DI PA 'TO TUMIGIL EH... ISANG ORAS NA GANYAN NANG GANYAN!...
PAGBIGYAN MO NA, BAKA EXCITED O KINAKA-BAHAN

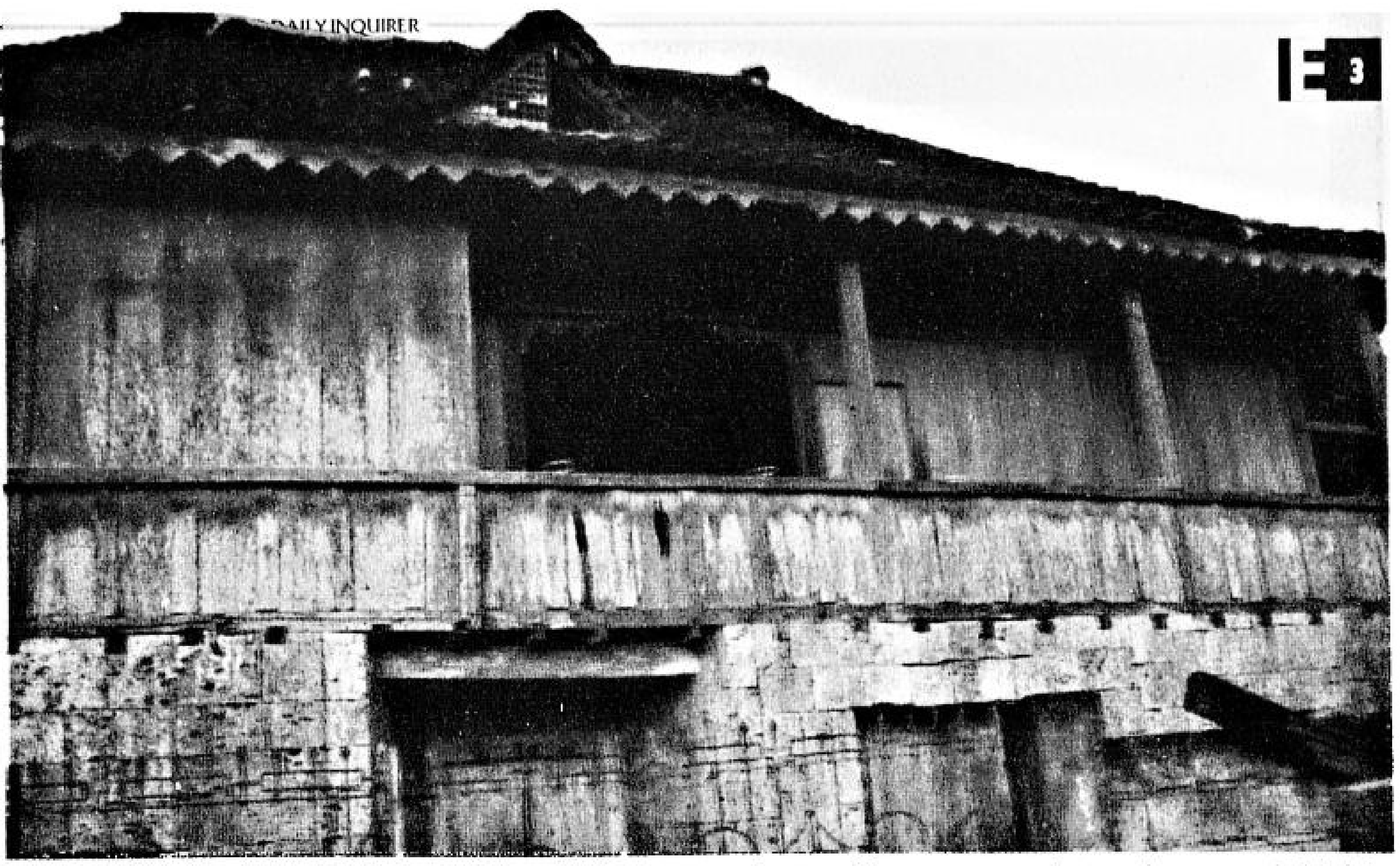
LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DARLING, BAKIT BA IYAK NG IYAK SI PIPO?!
WHAAAA!
EWAN KO BA!! ANO KAYA ANG GUSTO NG ANAK KO?!!
GUSTO KONG BUMOTO!!!
AKO RIN!!! I WANNA BE HEARD!!!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


STEP ASIDE, ARAW KO NGAYON!
NAIL POLISH
INDELIBLE INK

Conserving historic districts in Asia



HERITAGE structures like the Rocha house in Tagbilaran should be viewed not as solitary monuments, but must be conserved with their surrounding neighborhood setting.

The Hoi An Declaration of experts provides guidelines to conserve heritage buildings in the region

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

THE ANCIENT town of Hoi An in Vietnam was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1999. Located in the central region, it was a thriving commercial port in the Golden Age of maritime trade and a melting pot of cultures. The Chinese and the Japanese established quarters there long before the arrivals of merchants and missionaries from Europe.

Last September, an international group of government authorities, architects, archaeologists and other conservation practitioners met in the historic town and wrote the Hoi An Declaration. They made the declaration so that their long years of accumulated experience in cultural-heritage conservation may be utilized in other historic sites in Asia.

Historic villages and cities are a major part of the living cultural heritage of Asia. These are often the expression of a rich and fruitful history of cultural exchange between Asians through the centuries. However, many historic districts of Asia face irreparable damage or loss of identity and character for lack of adequate conservation measures, vehicular access controls and financial support.

Inhabitants of historic districts are key actors in conservation efforts. They should be involved in the planning, implementation and review phases of conservation. Public awareness, information, consultation and participation help the inhabitants understand and care for the heritage values of their historic district.

Inhabitants should be encouraged to use traditional knowledge in providing continuous care of historic buildings and neighborhoods. Voluntary and proactive participation of inhabitants and associations in cooperation with the government should be promoted and supported.

Cultural heritage and tourism development are not fundamentally opposed; they are mutually supporting. Particularly in Asia, tourism is a fast-growing economic activity that can provide strong motivation for preserving historic districts. It provides opportunities for people from different cultures to meet, understand and respect the history, culture and arts of an area.

The Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by the International Council for Monuments and Sites states that such economic activity has to be managed adequately to avoid damage of already fragile cultural heritage sites. Tourism representatives must join conservation authorities in establishing ways to achieve sustainable tourism development without exhausting nonrenewable cultural resources such as heritage.

Conservation measures for historic districts should include risk-preparedness to prevent damage or loss of cultural heritage in the event natural or man-made disasters occur. Priority must be given to the creation and maintenance of prevention and crisis management.

This must be done through close collaboration between the inhabitants, government, and other specialists. It is further necessary to make all inhabitants aware of the risk-preparedness methods through information campaigns and disaster drills.

Wooden heritage

Most Asian historic districts are composed of wooden buildings. The tradition of wood construction in Asia constitutes a major expression of the cultural diversity and influences.

However, it remains fragile, and its preservation in often densely populated historical areas is a daunting task.

The conservation of wooden architecture exposed to rain, high humidity, and temperature as well as termites and other biological agents, is a challenge. In the past, it led to the development of valuable traditional knowledge on the use of wood for structure or ornament and its maintenance and repair.

The conservation of historic districts is a complex enterprise whose success requires the involvement and cooperation of a diversity of people, institutions, nongovernmental organizations and specialists. Local cooperation is necessary to achieve the conservation goals and harmonize the actions of different stakeholders.

Interdisciplinary cooperation among professionals and academic researchers brings scientific and professional knowledge to resolve issues related to the multiple needs of architectural, urban or archaeological heritage in historic districts.

National and international cooperation also helps managers or specialists share experiences and precious lessons.

The World Heritage Convention of Unesco provides valuable framework for international cooperation in Asia between government and nongovernment organization.

Governments, international and regional organizations, universities, international development agencies, foundations and other partners should organize regular meetings and symposia to assess needs, measure progress, and determine priority areas of cooperation.

The Hoi An Declaration provides the general guidelines for conserving historic districts, pointing out the need for government and community to work together with conservation specialists to preserve historic towns and cities.

E-mail afvillalon@hotmail.com

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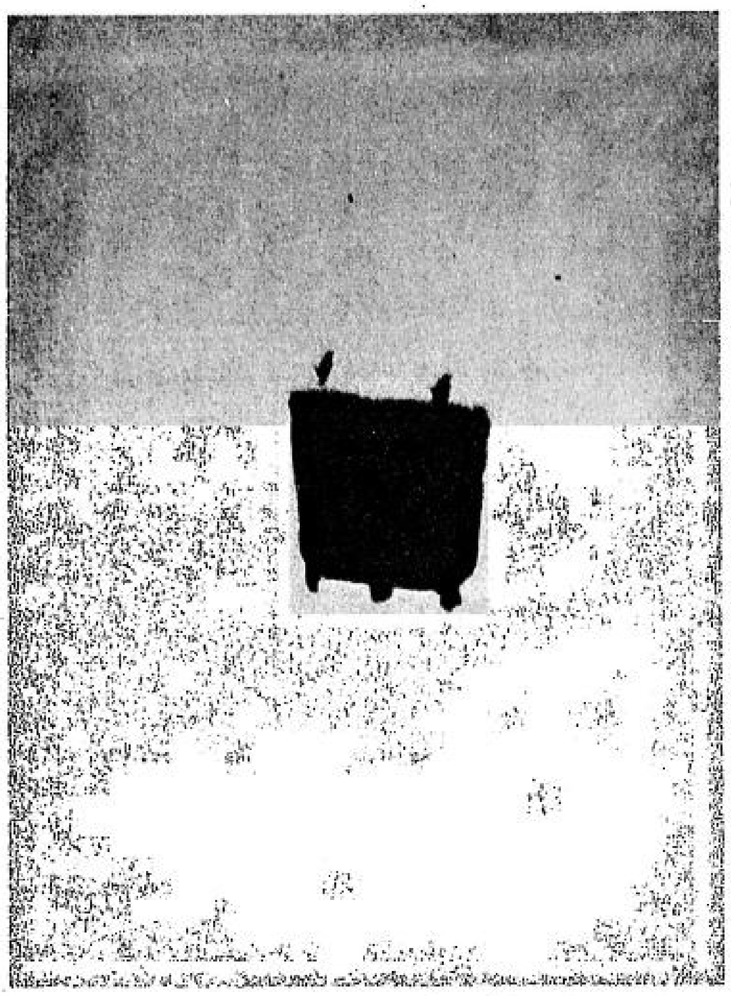
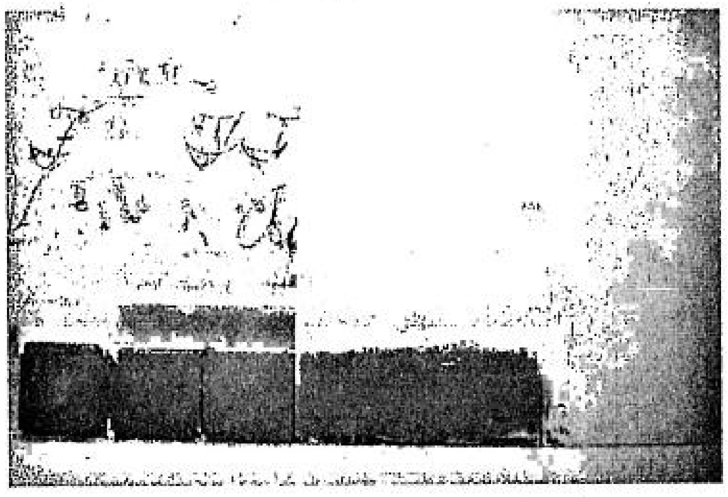


"INCREMENTS," by Joven Alcala



"MERGE of the Octavian Fleet," by Bernardo Pacquing

VISUAL ARTS

Parial tribute in Cabanatuan, 'Near Life Experience' at Mag:Net

LA PARILLA Hotel in Cabanatuan City mounts a group show paying tribute to Mario Parial, whose works have made him an important name in today's art scene. The exhibit will open on May 19. Participating artists are Greg Bolaños, Dante Castillo, Carlos Cea, Andi Cubi, Jerome Francisco, Roger Fulgado, Carlo Magno, Jun Martinez, Nards Miranda, Tony Nuñez, Noel Pascual, Omi Reyes, Oscar Salita, Jun Tiongco and Edwin Wilwayco.

MAG:NET Gallery (Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St, Makati, 8177895) presents the works of Johnny Alcazaren, Joven Alcala, Felix Bacolor, Nobbin Buendia, Raphael Castaneda and Bernardo Pacquing in "Near Life Experiences." The show does not represent a single theme or material, but a convergence of various interpretations. Most of the artists hail from the UP College of Fine Arts.

FINALE Art Gallery presents Poklong Anading's "Indistinct Conversations" on May 11-22 at SM Megamall. "Unreasonable Thoughts" is made up of two pieces of 4 ft x 4 ft canvases. "Line Syndrome" involves 20 canvases installed in four columns and five rows and a video. In the third part, Anading collected the tracings made by passers-by and used them as bases for 20 paintings.

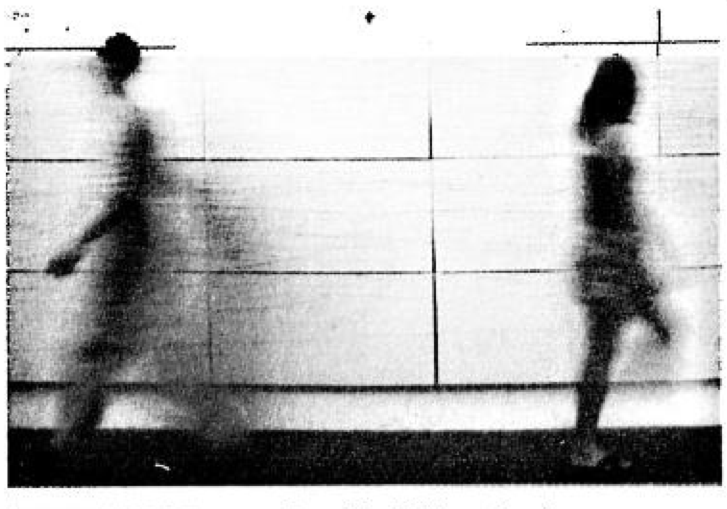
CASCADA sponsors Philip Brita Badon's "Food for the Soul, Drink for the Spirit, Dessert for the Body," which opens on May 13. Mediums are watercolor, acrylic on felt and acrylic on board. Cascada is located at 2/L, Greenbelt 3.

THE CRUCIBLE Gallery features Ferdie Montemayor's "Fiestang Bayan" on May 18-30 at 4/L, SM Megamall A. To be exhibited are five large-scale works depicting landscapes focusing on May festivities.

RICCO-RENZO Galleries displays the works of Min Kyi whose paintings depict Asian houses built by the sea, as well as countryside and farm scenes and boats. Ricco-Renzo Galleries is located at G/L, IDC Manila, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati.

THE ALCOVE Photo Gallery will hold a photography workshop on May 21, 24, 25 and 26, 6-9 p.m. and on May 22, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati. Call 7593371 or 8921801.

THE UP Vargas Museum and the UP Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Development will host a four-day workshop starting tomorrow on "Museum and Exhibition Design Development" and "Museum and Gallery Lighting" to be conducted by Razali Mahat and John Richards. The workshop will cover basic museum design, philosophy and approaches to museum and exhibition design development, and display and mount making. Practical modules will require participants to develop and design exhibitions as case studies. Workshop fee is P1,000 inclusive of materials, kit, certificate and refreshments. Limited slots only. Call 9281927 or 9205301 local 7408,



"INDISTINCT Conversations," by Poklong Anading

The rewards of a lake

From page E1

rising amid the ricefields. The façade is Baroque in inspiration. It is the work of Bartolome Palatino from Paete. In front of the church is a wall with the date of foundation: 1696!

Inside the church waited another special treat: a mini-concert featuring the works of Lucio San Pedro, National Artist from the neighboring town of Angono, Rizal. Playing the piano was Joyce Tumandong while on the flute was San Pedro's grandson, Gabby Roxas. Among the pieces they played was San Pedro's masterpiece "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan." It was so inspiring to sit in that cool church and watch as the very stones seemed animated by the wonderful music.

After Morong came Tanay. We were amused by the finials on the pediment which resembled pineapples. Marina Vargas Tantoco noted that this feature could show the Chinese influence as pineapples are considered good-luck charms in China (all those eyes!).

Inside, the *retablos* were truly splendid: gold and azure, carvings, baroque medallions, finely formed statues plus 17th- and 18th-century tabernacles.

What really impressed me though was the parish priest, Fr. Mario S. Openario. He noted that Tanay Church had been declared a national treasure by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Museum. As such, he explained in so many words that he had to be very careful before he touched anything. He believed that the church didn't just belong to the parish—it was the heritage of the entire Filipino nation. How refreshing and inspiring to hear this!

Tanay Church is famous for its Stations of the Cross from the 18th century. One of them has a figure looking at Christ through what appear to be sunglasses. As sunglasses were only popular in the mid-20th century, was the sculptor a Nostradamus? Eventually we developed a theory: the sunglasses were really spectacles. There were spectacles in that century. Someone just painted them black later on.

After Tanay on the road to Pila, the beautiful *duyans* for sale along the road caught our eyes. We all shouted "stop." Well, can you guess what happened next? Six *duyans* and one chair swing were soon being squeezed into the bus.

THE PINEAPPLE finial in Tanay Church

GABBY Roxas, grandson of National Artist Lucio San Pedro, plays the flute in Morong Church.

Like a miracle

Pila was almost like a mirage: gracious American period houses clustered around a huge grassy field of a plaza. Congratulations to the Pila Historical Society Foundation, Inc. headed by Cora Relova. This is probably one of the best-preserved town plazas I have seen. There are no fast-food joints to ruin the effect. Towns should learn how love for one's community comes first.

We were given the most delicious lunch by Coral. We had *ginataang hipon* topped with *kamias*, *dulong* flavored with calamansi, *lumpiang ubod*, *sotanghon*, *pako* salad with white cheese. There was even *bibingkang hipon* brought in from Paete.

For *merienda*, there was *pandesal* and more kesong puti—the best I have ever tasted. This was served by the river in Lumbang, Laguna. Then on to Paete Church. We were getting excited, eyeing the beautiful handicrafts and carvings that lined the road. Paete Church's *retablos* and paintings are a must. They are real gems of Philippine art. The four 18th century paintings alone are worth the effort of traveling a long way to Laguna.

The paintings were huge—from floor to ceiling. One was of the final judgement, another was of Heaven, Purgatory, Earth and Hell, and the rest were two versions of St. Christopher.

After the church, we went around the town shopping for handicrafts.

One of my companions commented regarding the difference between Pila and Paete. Pila was beautifully presented, while Paete—except for its church—was architecturally disorderly and confusing. Yet Paete was bustling with life while Pila seemed so sleepy.

That's when it hit me. We cannot save the heritage of a town with just a few ladies. We really have to get the whole community involved. And the way to do this would be to organize the people to set up businesses—craft shops, cafés, inns so they could benefit from the tourism brought in by the beauty of their heritage.

I dream of our old towns, like Pila, coming alive, filled with young people enjoying sidewalk cafés, little galleries, concerts, craft bazaars and open markets. It's going to take a lot of work but I'm sure it can be done. Then we can really reap the rewards of starting early to plan for the future.

E-mail beartist@filipinaslibrary. org.ph or address letters to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.

The fool in Bin Samonte's paintings

By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

This young painter is a romantic bidding us to see the world from the eyes of the eternal jester

THE NEW works of Bin Samonte of Artery (a group of young painters based in Malate, Manila) can be seen at Gallery Nine.

Dubbed "Art, Actually," the new series features the incongruity between art and reality, body and soul, and the mundane and spiritual as evinced by the fool archetype in Samonte's paintings.

Familiar figure

The fool is a familiar universal figure throughout the medieval and Renaissance period, appearing in poetry, songs and stories. In the Philippines, the fool is featured in folk tales that usually recount his subversiveness against authorial powers.

He is oftentimes depicted as the trickster outwitting the royalty and ending up laughing his way out of his quandaries. Unsurprisingly, many Filipinos have adopted the fool's strategy in dealing with uneven social relations and oppressive economic conditions.

Through wit and ironic gestures, the fool is able to laugh even in his most depressing situations. His subversiveness shows his resolute struggle to see the world differently from what one has been accustomed to.

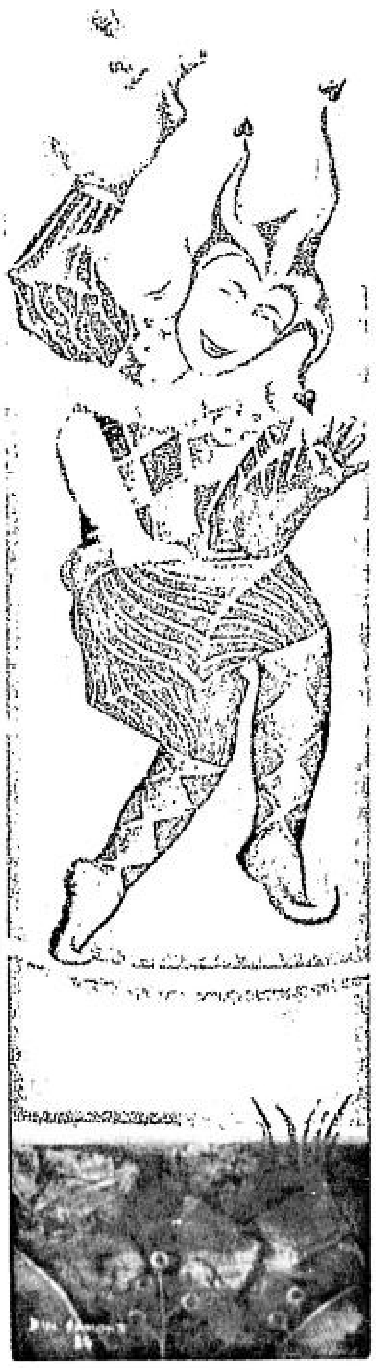
In Samonte's paintings, the fool is a potent image that traverses the workaday world and the ideal world. In his work "Chicken ala king" (oil on canvas, 22" x 12") Samonte explores the pun on the title by showing the fool as a king, munching on a chicken.

Similarly, in "Mellow Yellow" (oil on canvas, 22" x 17"), he tries to achieve the same taunting effect by presenting a fool eating a tawny melon. In both works, humdrum incidents are animated by his use of colors like red, yellow and green. These colors may not necessarily go together, but become harmonious only in the fool's reckoning.

Although the fool maybe criticized for being escapist, in the same way most Filipinos are, for Samonte the fool is really embarking on a journey, cognizant of the dangers he is facing.

The work "At the End of the Rainbow" (oil on canvas, 48" x 6") suggests how elusive oftentimes our search for a better life is. Just as the rainbow is both a presence and an absence at the same time, our aspirations speak of a future moment, a potential waiting to happen and a promise to be fulfilled.

This utopian feeling tells us nothing is really what it seems. We persist even if this means going away, searching for jobs elsewhere and leaving our loved ones. The horde of overseas contract workers abroad only proves the resilience of our spirit. Hence, to criticize the Filipinos as escapist may not necessarily be a fair assessment.



"STRINGS Attached"

Double vision

The fool imagines a world where the invisible becomes real and the absence a presence. He has a double vision. In our case, we see through things and the dexterity by which we handle incompatible things only proves the fool in us.

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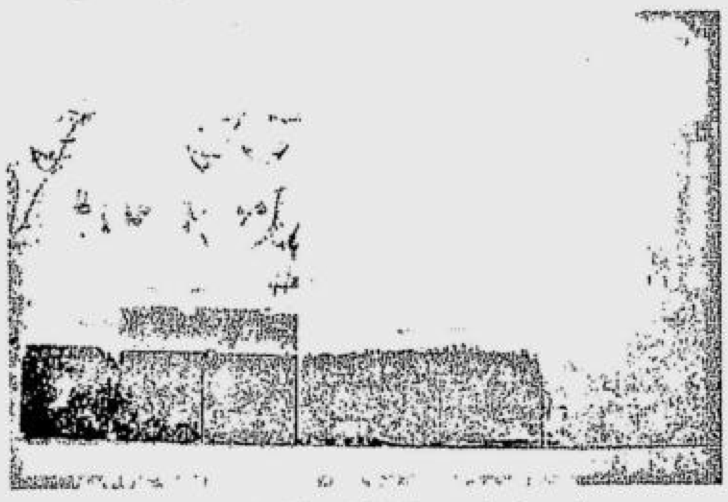
"INCREMENTS," by Joven Alcala



"MERGE of the Octavian Fleet," by Bernardo Pacquing

Parial tribute in Cabanatuan, 'Near Life Experience' at Mag:Net

VISUAL ARTS

LA PARILLA Hotel in Cabanatuan City mounts a group show paying tribute to Mario Parial, whose works have made him an important name in today's art scene. The exhibit will open on May 19. Participating artists are Greg Bolaños, Dante Castillo, Carlos Cea, Andi Cubi, Jerome Francisco, Roger Fulgado, Carlo Magno, Jun Martinez, Nards Miranda, Tony Nuñez, Noel Pascual, Omi Reyes, Oscar Salita, Jun Tiongco and Edwin Wilwayco.

MAG:NET Gallery (Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St, Makati, 8177895) presents the works of Johnny Alcazaren, Joven Alcala, Felix Bacolor, Nobbin Buendia, Raphael Castaneda and Bernardo Pacquing in "Near Life Experiences." The show does not represent a single theme or material, but a convergence of various interpretations. Most of the artists hail from the UP College of Fine Arts.

FINALE Art Gallery presents Poklong Anading's "Indistinct Conversations" on May 11-22 at SM Megamall. "Unreasonable Thoughts" is made up of two pieces of 4 ft x 4 ft canvases. "Line Syndrome" involves 20 canvases installed in four columns and five rows and a video. In the third part, Anading collected the tracings made by passers-by and used them as bases for 20 paintings.

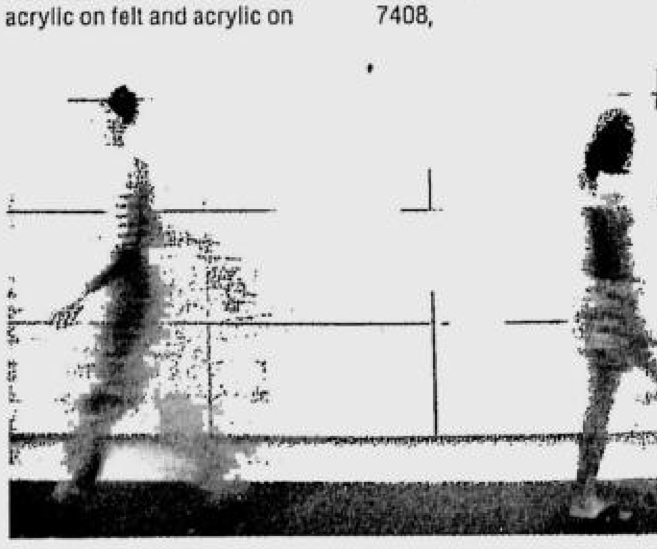
CASCADA sponsors Philip Brita Badon's "Food for the Soul, Drink for the Spirit, Dessert for the Body," which opens on May 13. Mediums are watercolor, acrylic on felt and acrylic on board. Cascada is located at 2/L, Greenbelt 3.

THE CRUCIBLE Gallery features Ferdie Montemayor's "Fiestang Bayan" on May 18-30 at 4/L, SM Megamall A. To be exhibited are five large-scale works depicting landscapes focusing on May festivities.

RICCO-RENZO Galleries displays the works of Min Kyi whose paintings depict Asian houses built by the sea, as well as countryside and farm scenes and boats. Ricco-Renzo Galleries is located at G/L, IDC Manila, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati.

THE ALCOVE Photo Gallery will hold a photography workshop on May 21, 24, 25 and 26, 6-9 p.m. and on May 22, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati. Call 7593371 or 8921801.

THE UP Vargas Museum and the UP Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Development will host a four-day workshop starting tomorrow on "Museum and Exhibition Design Development" and "Museum and Gallery Lighting" to be conducted by Razali Mahat and John Richards. The workshop will cover basic museum design, philosophy and approaches to museum and exhibition design development, and display and mount making. Practical modules will require participants to develop and design exhibitions as case studies. Workshop fee is P1,000 inclusive of materials, kit, certificate and refreshments. Limited slots only. Call 9281927 or 9205301 local 7408,



"INDISTINCT Conversations," by Poklong Anading

The rewards of a lake

From page E1

rising amid the ricefields. The façade is Baroque in inspiration. It is the work of Bartolome Palatino from Paete. In front of the church is a wall with the date of foundation: 1696!

Inside the church waited another special treat: a mini-concert featuring the works of Lucio San Pedro, National Artist from the neighboring town of Angono, Rizal. Playing the piano was Joyce Tumandong while on the flute was San Pedro's grandson, Gabby Roxas. Among the pieces they played was San Pedro's masterpiece "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan." It was so inspiring to sit in that cool church and watch as the very stones seemed animated by the wonderful music.

After Morong came Tanay. We were amused by the finials on the pediment which resembled pineapples. Marina Vargas Tantoco noted that this feature could show the Chinese influence as pineapples are considered good-luck charms in China (all those eyes!).

Inside, the *retablos* were truly splendid: gold and azure, carvings, baroque medallions, finely formed statues plus 17th- and 18th-century tabernacles.

What really impressed me though was the parish priest, Fr. Mario S. Openario. He noted that Tanay Church had been declared a national treasure by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Museum. As such, he explained in so many words that he had to be very careful before he touched anything. He believed that the church didn't just belong to the parish—it was the heritage of the entire Filipino nation. How refreshing and inspiring to hear this!

Tanay Church is famous for its Stations of the Cross from the 18th century. One of them has a figure looking at Christ through what appear to be sunglasses. As sunglasses were only popular in the mid-20th century, was the sculptor a Nostradamus? Eventually we developed a theory: the sunglasses were really spectacles. There were spectacles in that century. Someone just painted them black later on.

After Tanay on the road to Pila, the beautiful *duyans* for sale along the road caught our eyes. We all shouted "stop." Well, can you guess what happened next? Six *duyans* and one chair swing were soon being squeezed into the bus.

THE PINEAPPLE finial in Tanay Church

GABBY Roxas, grandson of National Artist Lucio San Pedro, plays the flute in Morong Church.

Like a miracle

Pila was almost like a mirage: gracious American period houses clustered around a huge grassy field of a plaza. Congratulations to the Pila Historical Society Foundation, Inc. headed by Cora Relova. This is probably one of the best-preserved town plazas I have seen. There are no fast-food joints to ruin the effect. Towns should learn how love for one's community comes first.

We were given the most delicious lunch by Coral. We had *ginataang hipon* topped with *kamias*, *dulong* flavored with calamansi, *lumpiang ubod*, *sotanghon*, *pako* salad with white cheese. There was even *bibingkang hipon* brought in from Paete.

For *merienda*, there was *pandesal* and more kesong puti—the best I have ever tasted. This was served by the river in Lumbang, Laguna. Then on to Paete Church. We were getting excited, eyeing the beautiful handicrafts and carvings that lined the road. Paete Church's *retablos* and paintings are a must. They are real gems of Philippine art. The four 18th century paintings alone are worth the effort of traveling a long way to Laguna.

The paintings were huge—from floor to ceiling. One was of the final judgement, another was of Heaven, Purgatory, Earth and Hell, and the rest were two versions of St. Christopher.

After the church, we went around the town shopping for handicrafts.

One of my companions commented regarding the difference between Pila and Paete. Pila was beautifully presented, while Paete—except for its church—was architecturally disorderly and confusing. Yet Paete was bustling with life while Pila seemed so sleepy.

That's when it hit me. We cannot save the heritage of a town with just a few ladies. We really have to get the whole community involved. And the way to do this would be to organize the people to set up businesses—craft shops, cafés, inns so they could benefit from the tourism brought in by the beauty of their heritage.

I dream of our old towns, like Pila, coming alive, filled with young people enjoying sidewalk cafés, little galleries, concerts, craft bazaars and open markets. It's going to take a lot of work but I'm sure it can be done. Then we can really reap the rewards of starting early to plan for the future.

E-mail beartist@filipinaslibrary. org.ph or address letters to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.

The fool in Bin Samonte's paintings

By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

This young painter is a romantic bidding us to see the world from the eyes of the eternal jester

THE NEW works of Bin Samonte of Artery (a group of young painters based in Malate, Manila) can be seen at Gallery Nine.

Dubbed "Art, Actually," the new series features the incongruity between art and reality, body and soul, and the mundane and spiritual as evinced by the fool archetype in Samonte's paintings.

Familiar figure

The fool is a familiar universal figure throughout the medieval and Renaissance period, appearing in poetry, songs and stories. In the Philippines, the fool is featured in folk tales that usually recount his subversiveness against authorial powers.

He is oftentimes depicted as the trickster outwitting the royalty and ending up laughing his way out of his quandaries. Unsurprisingly, many Filipinos have adopted the fool's strategy in dealing with uneven social relations and oppressive economic conditions.

Through wit and ironic gestures, the fool is able to laugh even in his most depressing situations. His subversiveness shows his resolute struggle to see the world differently from what one has been accustomed to.

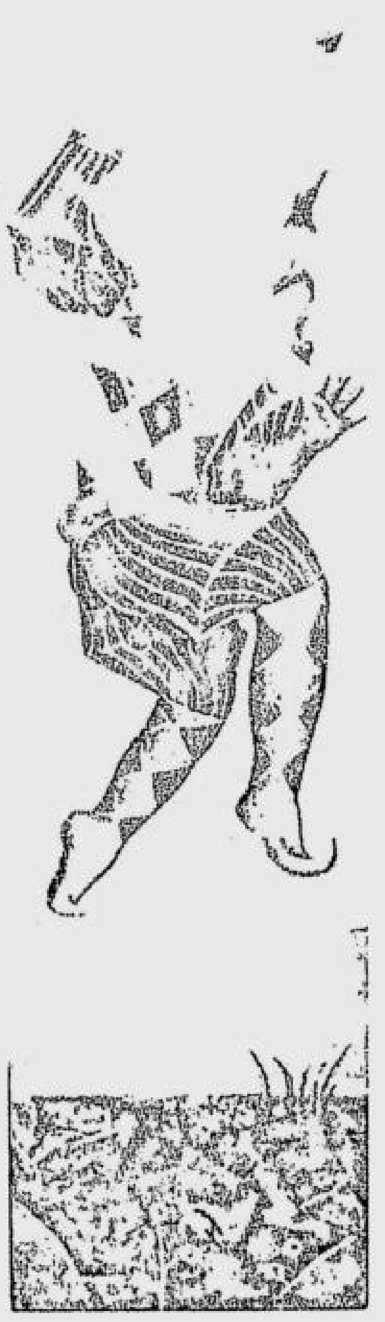
In Samonte's paintings, the fool is a potent image that traverses the workaday world and the ideal world. In his work "Chicken ala king" (oil on canvas, 22" x 12") Samonte explores the pun on the title by showing the fool as a king, munching on a chicken.

Similarly, in "Mellow Yellow" (oil on canvas, 22" x 17"), he tries to achieve the same taunting effect by presenting a fool eating a tawny melon. In both works, humdrum incidents are animated by his use of colors like red, yellow and green. These colors may not necessarily go together, but become harmonious only in the fool's reckoning.

Although the fool maybe criticized for being escapist, in the same way most Filipinos are, for Samonte the fool is really embarking on a journey, cognizant of the dangers he is facing.

The work "At the End of the Rainbow" (oil on canvas, 48" x 6") suggests how elusive oftentimes our search for a better life is. Just as the rainbow is both a presence and an absence at the same time, our aspirations speak of a future moment, a potential waiting to happen and a promise to be fulfilled.

This utopian feeling tells us nothing is really what it seems. We persist even if this means going away, searching for jobs elsewhere and leaving our loved ones. The horde of overseas contract workers abroad only proves the resilience of our spirit. Hence, to criticize the Filipinos as escapist may not necessarily be a fair assessment.



"STRINGS Attached"

Double vision

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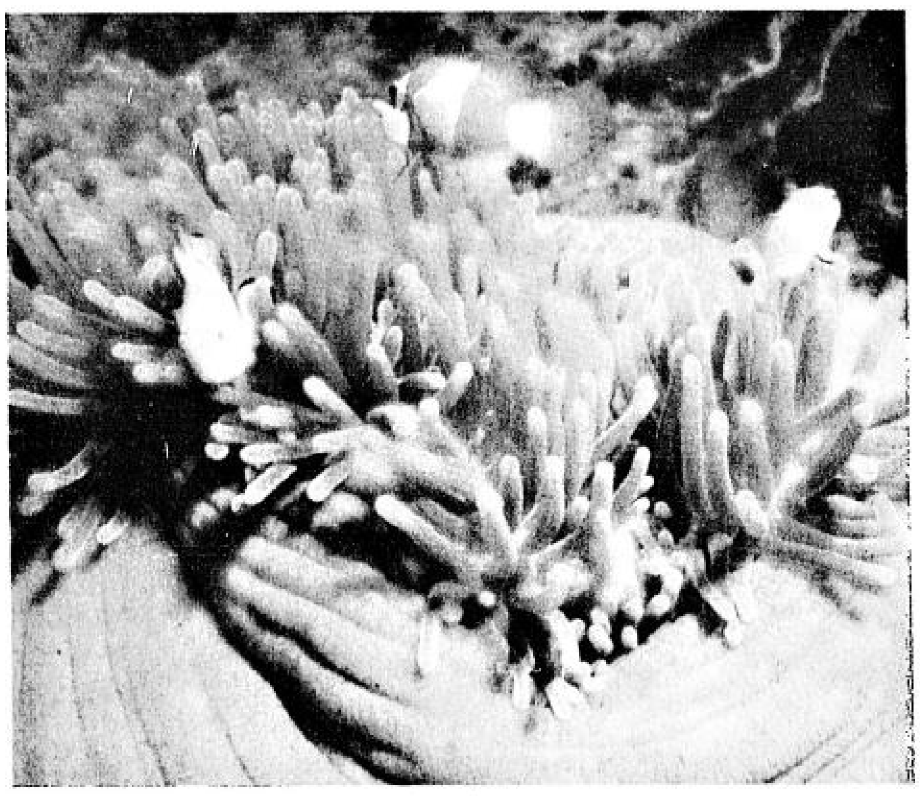
Along with our oppression comes the articulation of a possibility. Samonte, a young painter and a romantic, believes in that possibility, and he bids us to see the world from a fool's perspective.

"SEA of Pearls," Majuro, Marshall Islands



"FALSE Clown Anemonefish," El Nido, Palawan

Singapore's 'Seasons in the Sea' exhibit welcomes guests with a stunning shot of Palawan's underwater wonders

Finding Nemo in the Philippines

By Jasmine W. Payo

IN A PHOTO exhibit in Singapore, guests quickly recognized a picture of Nemo, the adorable orange clown fish made famous by Walt Disney and Pixar. The photograph, prominently displayed at the gallery entrance, shows a family of orange clown fish together with a round, violet anemone (a flower-like sea creature).

Captured by the camera of renowned Japanese photographer Ikuo Nakamura, this Nemo, however, was found in the Philippines.

The vivid underwater scene ("False Clown Anemonefish") taken in El Nido, Palawan, is one of the 28 breathtaking images in the "Seasons in the Sea" exhibit at Epsite, the first digital gallery in Singapore.

"All the pictures on display here I handpicked myself. So all of them are memorable pieces. Some are decades-old, some are new pictures," Nakamura said through an interpreter.

The 59-year-old underwater and nature photographer brings the beauty of marine life in this exhibit. In "Underwater Flower Garden," Nakamura captures the colorful sea bed of the Red Sea in Egypt. In "Coral Reef Playgrounds," Okinawa, Japan, shows its wondrous array of underwater creatures.

There are also amazing air shots of coral reefs in "Sea of Pearls," taken on Majuro, Marshall Islands, and in "Coral Reefs," on Kayangel Island, Republic of Palau.

Other interesting photos are the seaside snapshots such as "Lazy Hazy Days" taken in Rasdhoo Atoll, Maldives; "Old Testament Images," Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; and "A Beautiful Pose," Rangiroa Island, Tahiti.

Passion

Born in Akita Prefecture, Japan, Nakamura started diving and taking underwater photos at age 20. From mere fascination, he eventually became a reputable news photographer in Japan. He has traveled to 74 countries and published works for 38 years.

The affable Nakamura recounted his visits to the Philippines: "I've been to the Philippines many times—Batangas, Cebu, Palawan, Sulu. I fell in love with the sea of the Philippines 25 years ago."

But much as he enjoyed seeing the charms of the sea, Nakamura also shared the dangers of underwater photography.

"One time when I jumped off a boat, I found myself in front of a huge shark. It was so up close and personal. I had my camera in hand but I thought I fainted. My hand was moving so, I somehow managed to capture the picture. I was so scared, but it was a whale shark, so it was a harmless shark. But I didn't know, so I panicked. And it was about the time when they were showing the movie 'Jaws,'" he recalled.

Such fears, though, are eventually dismissed, as nothing can sway Nakamura's love for the sea. During the exhibit launch, he spoke enthusiastically of the creatures found underwater and discussed even more fervently different social and environmental issues.

"One challenge is raising public awareness to social issues. Whatever is happening underwater is a reflection of the land," he said.

The sea has, indeed, become Nakamura's passion. And in order to convey his message of conservation, he believes people should first get a glimpse of the marine environment.

In fact, he encourages exhibit guests to go beyond visual appreciation. Because unlike conventional photos, all the enlarged digital prints reproduced by Epson's inkjet printers allow people to have a tactile experience.

"In a normal exhibition, you are not allowed to touch the pictures. But I found out that when people like a particular picture, they want to touch it at some point. As a professional photographer, I prefer my audience to be excited by my picture rather than just go through watching it without touching it," he said.

Nakamura hopes that the appreciation and excitement will inspire action.

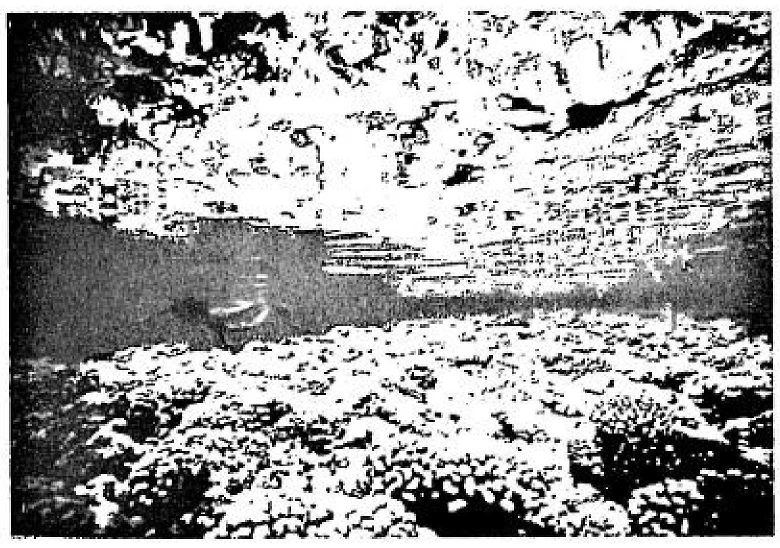
"Environmental destruction is progressing globally. The message I want to send out is the importance of protection. I want people to see the beauty of nature and that we can cohabit with nature," Nakamura said.

Indeed, if more people heed Nakamura's words, we'll be lucky to witness his captured moments in the sea for many more seasons.

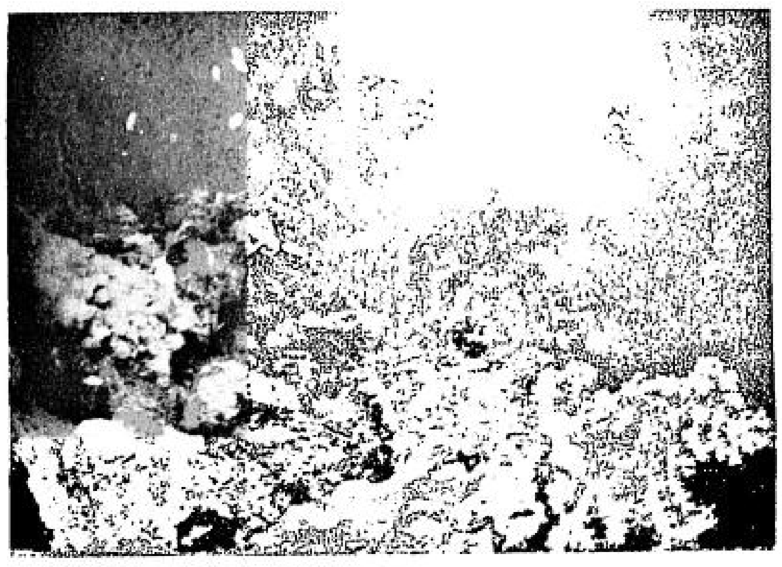
"Seasons in the Sea" runs until May 31 at Epsite, Epson Imaging Gallery, 3/L, Wheelock Place, Orchard Road, Singapore. Admission is free.

"AN ELEGANT Swim"

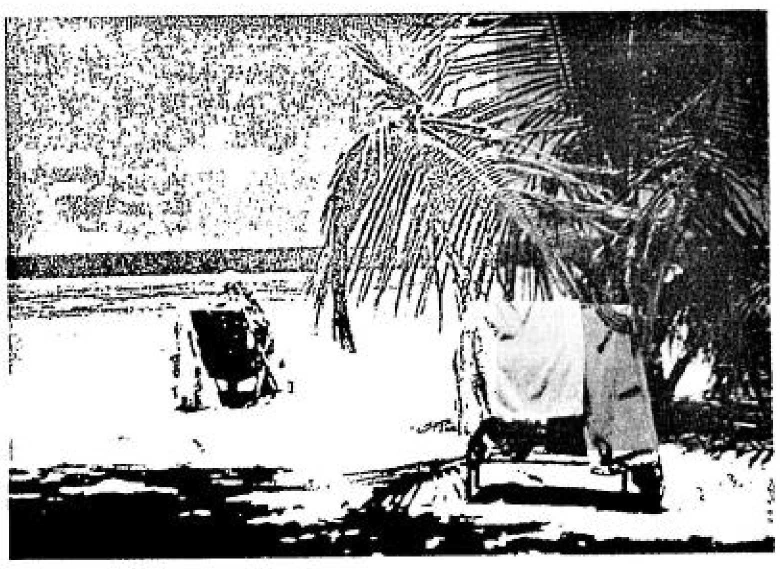
UNDERWATER and nature photographer Ikuo Nakamura with "Coral Reef Playgrounds," one of his photos taken in Iriomote-jima, Okinawa, Japan JASMINE PAYO



"CORAL Reflections," Las Mohammed, Egypt



"UNDERWATER Flower Garden," Red Sea, Egypt



"LAZY Hazy Days," Rasdhoo Atoll, Maldives

Shanghai Museum exhibits jewelry house's best

FOR MORE than 150 years, world-renowned jeweler Cartier has been producing a breathtaking array of jewelry, timepieces and other sparkling creations.

The best of these are on exhibit at the historic Shanghai Museum. The exhibit allows Cartier's patrons and the rest of the world to enjoy the artistry of Cartier.

The display traces the history and legend of the timepieces, many of them owned by the rich and the famous.

The Art de Cartier Collection consists of diverse pieces—from the necklace of the Maharajah Sir Bhupindar Singh of Patiala to the Tiger lorgnette of the Duchess of Windsor and the "Academician" sword of Jean Cocteau.

The memoirs of Cartier are on exhibit.

The exhibit also includes clocks and watches, curios, cosmetic boxes, handbags and other pieces. Some archive drawings are on display.

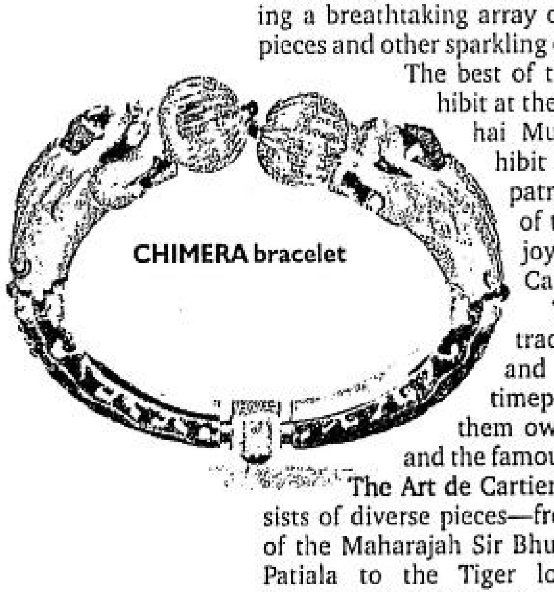
Together, the collection underscores that Cartier's enormous success worldwide is based on its unique design and exquisite craftsmanship.

Cartier designers have always drawn inspiration from the artistic traditions of other countries, especially China.

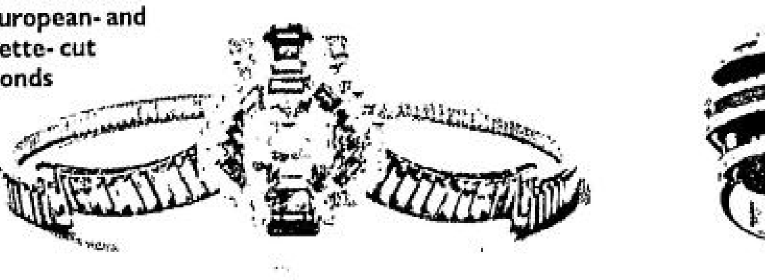
The exhibit's sections include: the early days; enamel and the Russian influence; the garland style and the beginnings of Art Deco; Art Deco and color combinations; the appeal of the East; mystery clocks; the 1930s and '40s; flora and fauna; and contemporary designs.

This exhibit establishes Cartier as one of the world's luxury leaders in jewelry and culture.

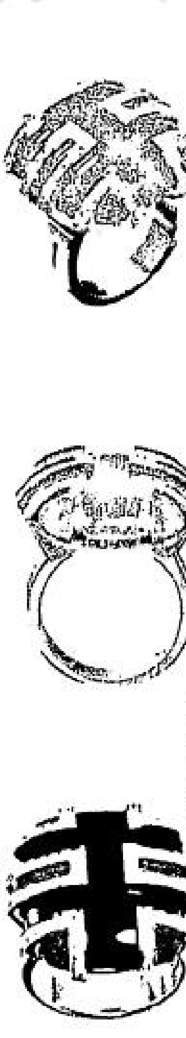
In the Philippines, Cartier is exclusively available at Rustan's Department Store.



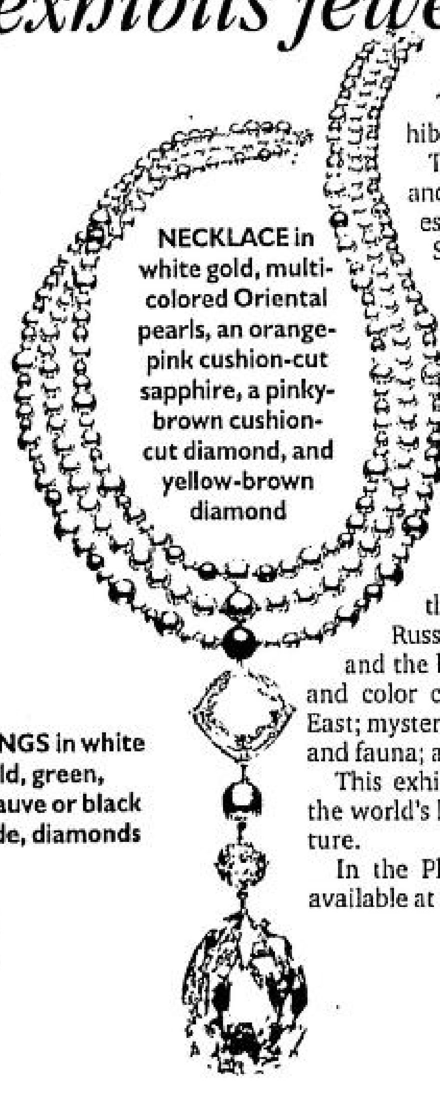
CHIMERA bracelet



TIARA in gold, platinum, citrines, old European- and baguette- cut diamonds

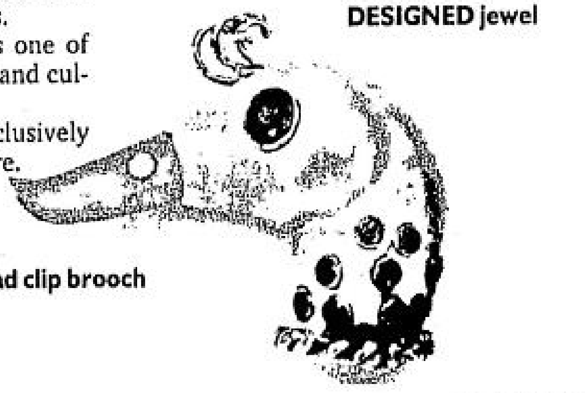


RINGS in white gold, green, mauve or black jade, diamonds



NECKLACE in white gold, multi-colored Oriental pearls, an orange-pink cushion-cut sapphire, a pinky-brown cushion-cut diamond, and yellow-brown diamond

ANIMAL-DESIGNED jewel



DUCK Head clip brooch

Top groups mount a cappella concert

WATCH The CompanY, The Opera and The Tux blend their musical talents for the first time in an evening of a cappella music, "Kantapella," at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo on May 25-26 at 8 p.m.

Each group will perform individually and in tandem with one another, as well as with popular guest artists in a program of rock, jazz, pop and standard favorites. Chris Millado directs while lighting design is by Dennis Marasigan.

Tickets are available at P900, P600, P500, and P350 at the CCP Box Office and TicketWorld in National Book Stores and Tower Records. Students and senior citizens get discounts.

The CompanY is composed of alumni of the Ateneo College Glee Club. Members are Sweet Plantado (soprano), Anme Quintos (soprano/alto), Cecile Bautista (alto), Reuben Laurente (tenor), Andre Castillo (tenor/baritone) and Moy Ortiz (tenor2/bass).

Composed of singers Sushi Reyes, Cecile Aurellado, Manolo Tanquilut and Zebedee Zuniga, The Opera quartet sings pop, jazz, R&B, and classical. They

TOP/E7

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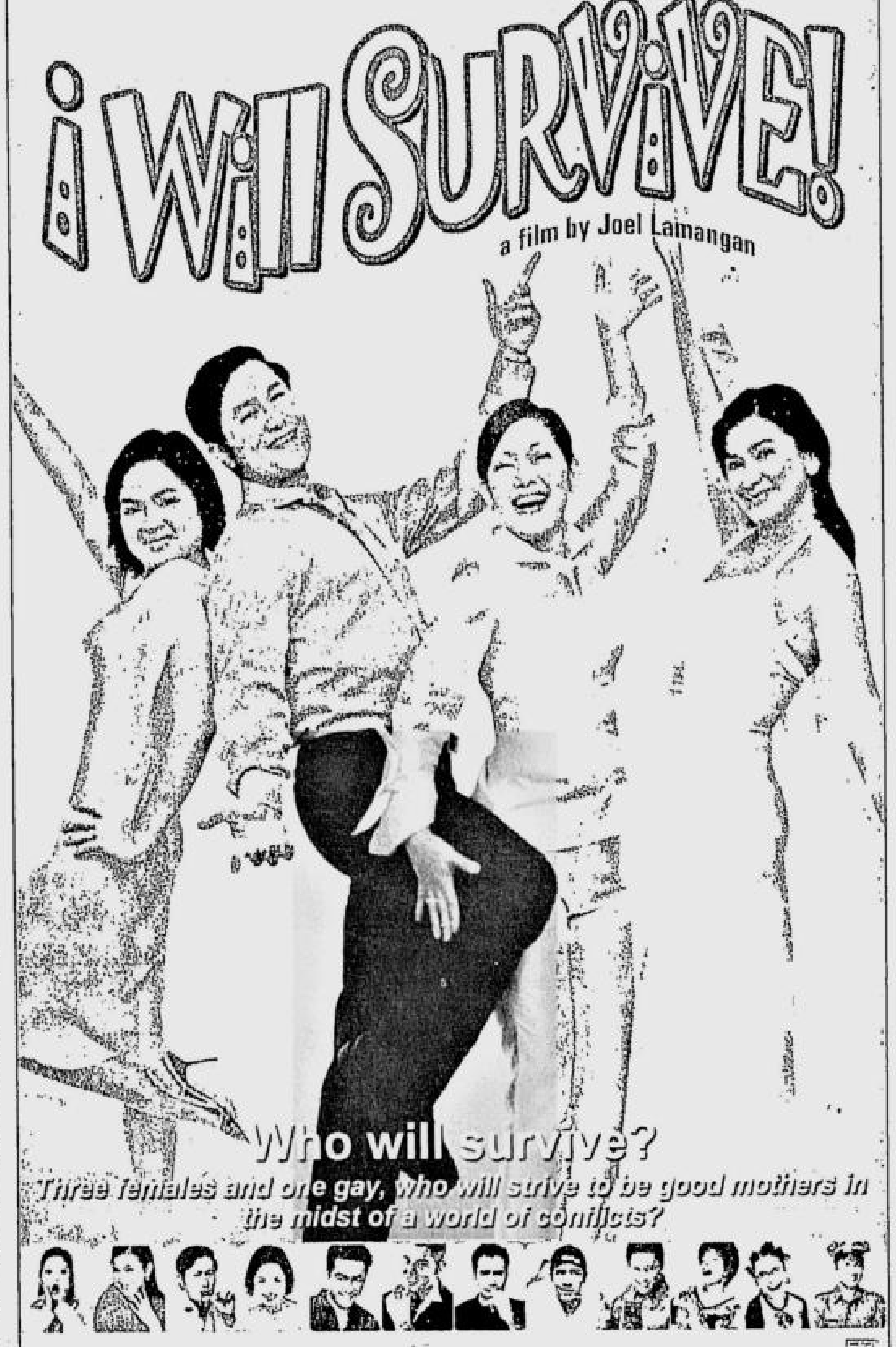
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1	STARSKY & HUTCH	11:40, 1:50, 4:00 6:10, 8:20, 10:30	PG 13
2	VAN HELSING	11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	PG-13
3	THE CONFESSIONS OF TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	11:35, 1:50, 4.05, 6.20 8:35, 10:50	GP
4	I WILL SURVIVE	12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00	PG 13

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STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9.50	CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN GP 12:05, 2.00, 3:55, 5:50, 7:45, 9.40	VAN HELSING PG13 1:25, 4:05, 6:45, 9:25
-VAN HELSING PG13 12:35, 3:15, 5:55, 8:35	MAN ON FIRE R18 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00	VAN HELSING PG13 12:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20

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ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY: LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	U-BELT / VENUS
CORONET B	A MAN APART
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REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
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B	CLOSED
C	
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SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
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CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SCHOOL OF ROCK
CINEMA-2	ANIMAL
CINEMA-3	WHOLE 10 YARDS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DUDA
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MAN ON FIRE
CINEMA-6	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-7	SEX EDUCATION
CINEMA-8	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	VAN HELSING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	VAN HELSING
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CONFESSIONS OF DRAMA QUEEN
CINEMA-12	STARSKY & HUTCH
CINEMA-14	HELLBOY
CINEMA-15	I WILL SURVIVE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	PATCH UP
CINEMA-1	ANIMAL
CINEMA-2	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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CINEMA-4	SELDA

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GALLERIA 632-9115 to 16 / 687-0593

Cinema	Movie	Times
CINEMA 1 THX	VAN HELSING	10:55, 1:50, 4:45, 7:40, 10:30
2	I WILL SURVIVE	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
3	HELLBOY	10.45, 1.30, 4.15, 7.00, 9.45
4	CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	10.25, 12.43, 2.55, 5.10, 7.25, 9.40
5	VAN HELSING	10.20, 1.15, 4.10, 7.05, 10.00
6	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
7	PAYCHECK	11.35, 1.50, 4.05, 6.20, 8.35, 10.30
8	SCHOOL OF ROCK	11.50, 2.00, 4.10, 6.20, 8.30, 10.30
9	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
10	MAN ON FIRE	10.15, 1.10, 4.05, 7.00, 9.55

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	VAN HELSING	10:30, 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50
2	HELLBOY	10.20, 12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7.40, 10.00
3	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30, 9.40
4	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30, 9.40
5	CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	11.15, 1.05, 2.55, 4.45, 6.35, 8.25, 10.00
6	MAN ON FIRE	10.40, 1.25, 4.10, 6.55, 9.43
7	I WILL SURVIVE	10.10, 12.25, 2.40, 4.55, 7.10, 9.40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	10.50, 12.50, 2.50, 4.50, 6.50, 9.00
2	VAN HELSING	12.50, 4.10, 7.30, 11.30
3	VAN HELSING	12.50, 4.10, 7.30, 11.30
4	MAN ON FIRE	10.35, 1.40, 4.00, 6.25, 9.00
5	HELLBOY	11:20, 1.40, 4.00, 6.25, 9.00
6	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.50, 12.50, 2.50, 4.50, 6.50, 9.00
7	SCHOOL OF ROCK	11.00, 1.00, 3.00, 5.00, 7.00, 9.00
8	I WILL SURVIVE	12.30, 3.00, 5.30, 8.00, 10.30

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	VAN HELSING	12.15, 3.05, 5:55, 8.45, 11.15
2	CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.10
3	MAN ON FIRE	12.00, 2.40, 5.20, 8.10
4	STARSKY AND HUTCH	11.30, 1.45, 4.00, 6.15, 8.30
5	SCHOOL OF ROCK	12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.10
6	HELLBOY	11.45, 1.55, 4.05, 6.15, 8.30
7	I WILL SURVIVE	11.45, 1.55, 4.05, 6.15, 8.30
8	HAUNTED SPIRIT	12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.1

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2 VAN HELSING	2 I WILL SURVIVE	2 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
3 I WILL SURVIVE	3 SORUM	3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 THE UNINVITED	4 MAN ON FIRE	4 STARSKY AND HUTCH
		5 HELLBOY

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870	Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125	Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	1 MAN ON FIRE
2 MAN OF FIRE	2 I WILL SURVIVE	2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH	3 STARSKY AND HUTCH	3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	4 CHECK-INN	4 SORUM
5 HELLBOY	5 HELLBOY	5 VAN HELSING
		6 THX VAN HELSING

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1 VAN HELSING	1 HELLBOY	1 HELLBOY
2 HELLBOY	2 PETER PAN	2 THE UNINVITED
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH	3 TAKING LIVES	3 TAKING LIVES
4 HAUNTED SPIRIT	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCHOOL OF ROCK	5 PAYCHECK	5 I WILL SURVIVE
6 I WILL SURVIVE	6 THE UNINVITED	6 PAYCHECK

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Ali 6	CONFESSION... DRAMA QUEEN
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MAY 29	THE SEARCHERS
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Bacolod retrospective pays tribute to Peque Gallaga

IN CELEBRATION of the 85th anniversary of Philippine cinema, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and Mowelfund Film Institute will hold "A Salute to Maurice 'Peque' Gallaga," a film retrospective and a tribute to the maker of "Oro, Plata, Mata" and "Scorpio Nights." The event will be held at the Gaisano Super Mall in Gallaga's Bacolod hometown on May 21-23.

The retrospective features the various Gallaga oeuvre: the historical film "Virgin Forest," the children's fantasy "Magic Temple," the domestic drama "Unfaithful Wife," the horror film "Tiyanak" and the youth action film "Gangland."

Outstanding scholars and film personalities will discuss Gallaga's artistic accomplishments and film career that spans close to 40 years. Papers will also be delivered on his contributions to cinema and culture.

The panel will include filmmaker Nick Deocampo, art professor Patrick Flores, film critic May Datuin, actor Joel Torre, production designer Cesar Hernando, and Negros-based playwright Elsie Coscolluela.

Gallaga was a theater person who started work in the cinema as the production designer in Eddie Romero's classic "Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?" He came to his own as a director in 1982 with "Oro, Plata, Mata."

The film tribute is a kick-off to Pelikula at Kultura, the outreach program of the NCCA's National Cinema Audience Development Program.

Film screenings will also be held in Antique, Aklan, Bohol, Cagayan de Oro, Capiz, Dagupan, General Santos, Isabela, Legaspi, Naga, Palawan and Zamboanga.

Call (02) 7271961 or 4104545.

CHERIE Gil and Joel Torre in "Oro, Plata, Mata"

Top groups mount a capella concert

From page E6

released an album in 1992 for Viva Records, "Can We Just Stop and Talk Awhile."

The Tux, made up of Jeric Mariano, Manny Aquino, Popo Suanes, Carlo Bulahan, Eric Antonio, Dante Sibug and Monet Silvestre, has built up a repertoire of old standards from the '40s, '50s, '60s and the '70s.

It received the 1984 Aliw Award for Most Promising Showband/Group, and later Best Showband/Group award.

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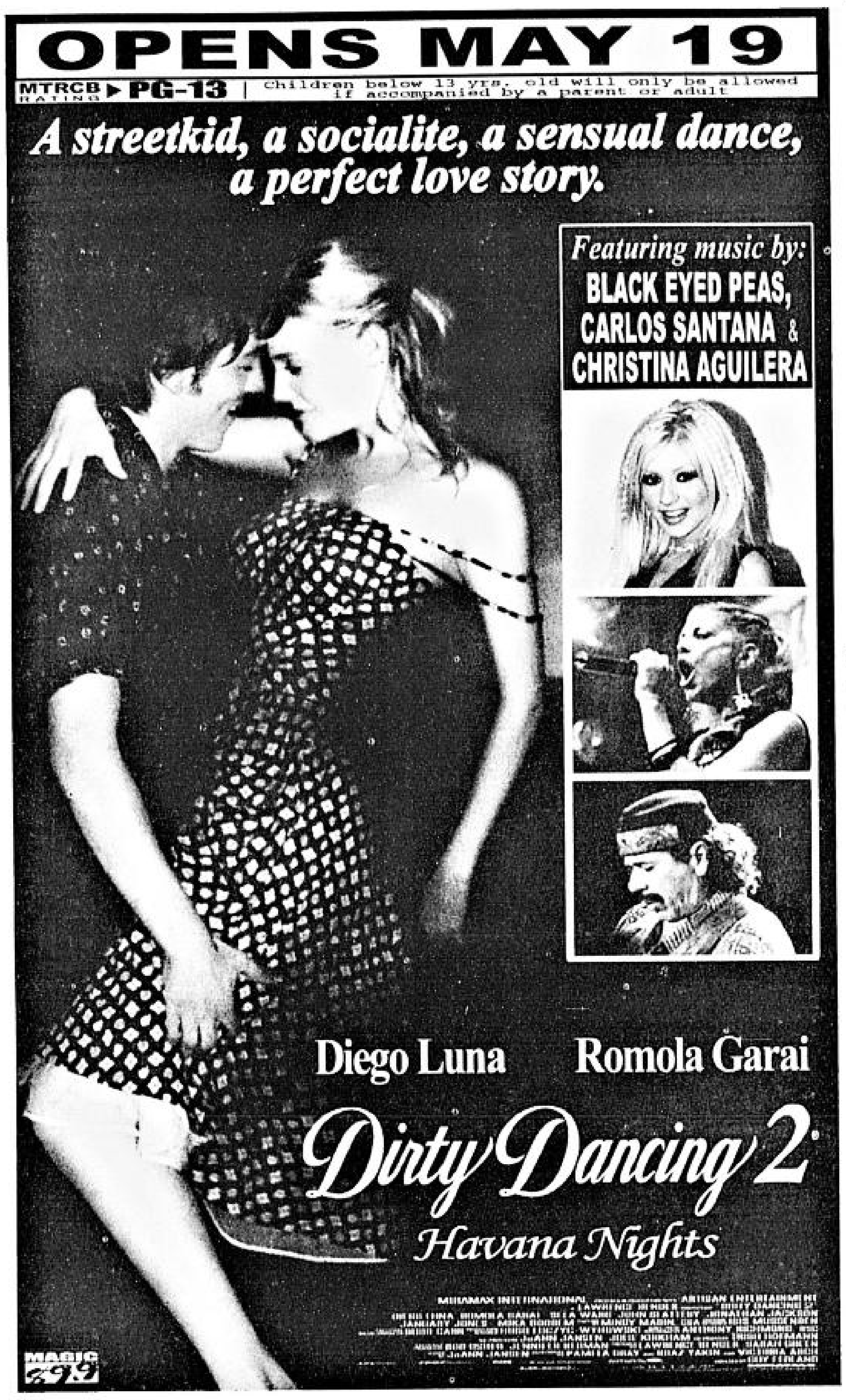
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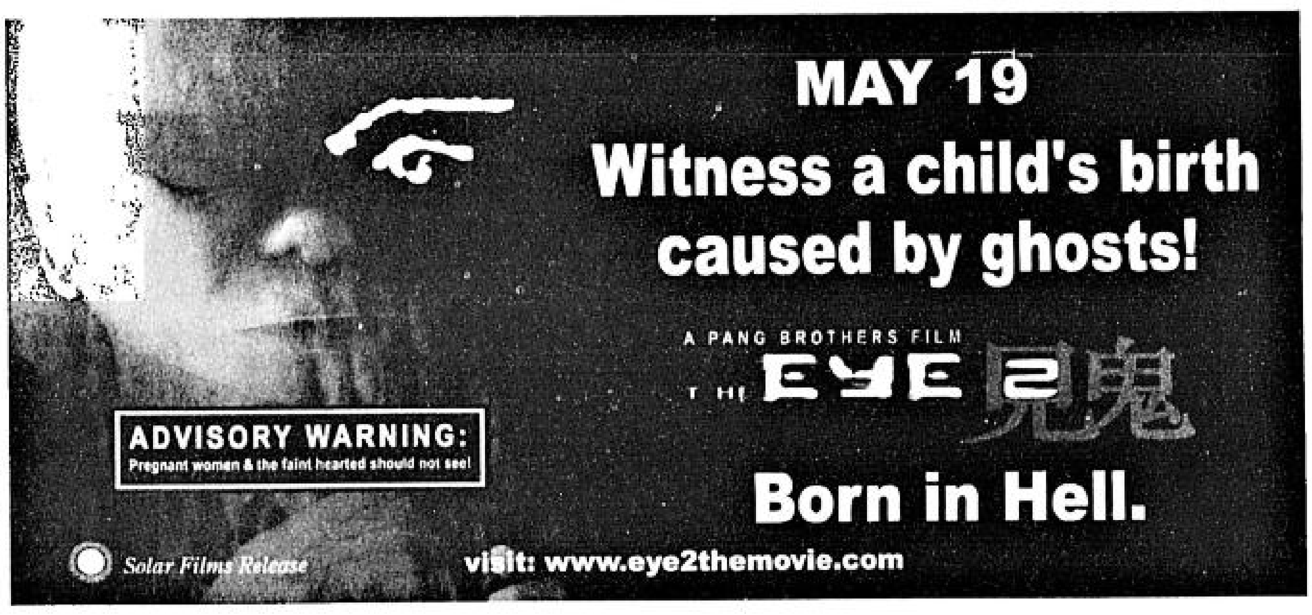
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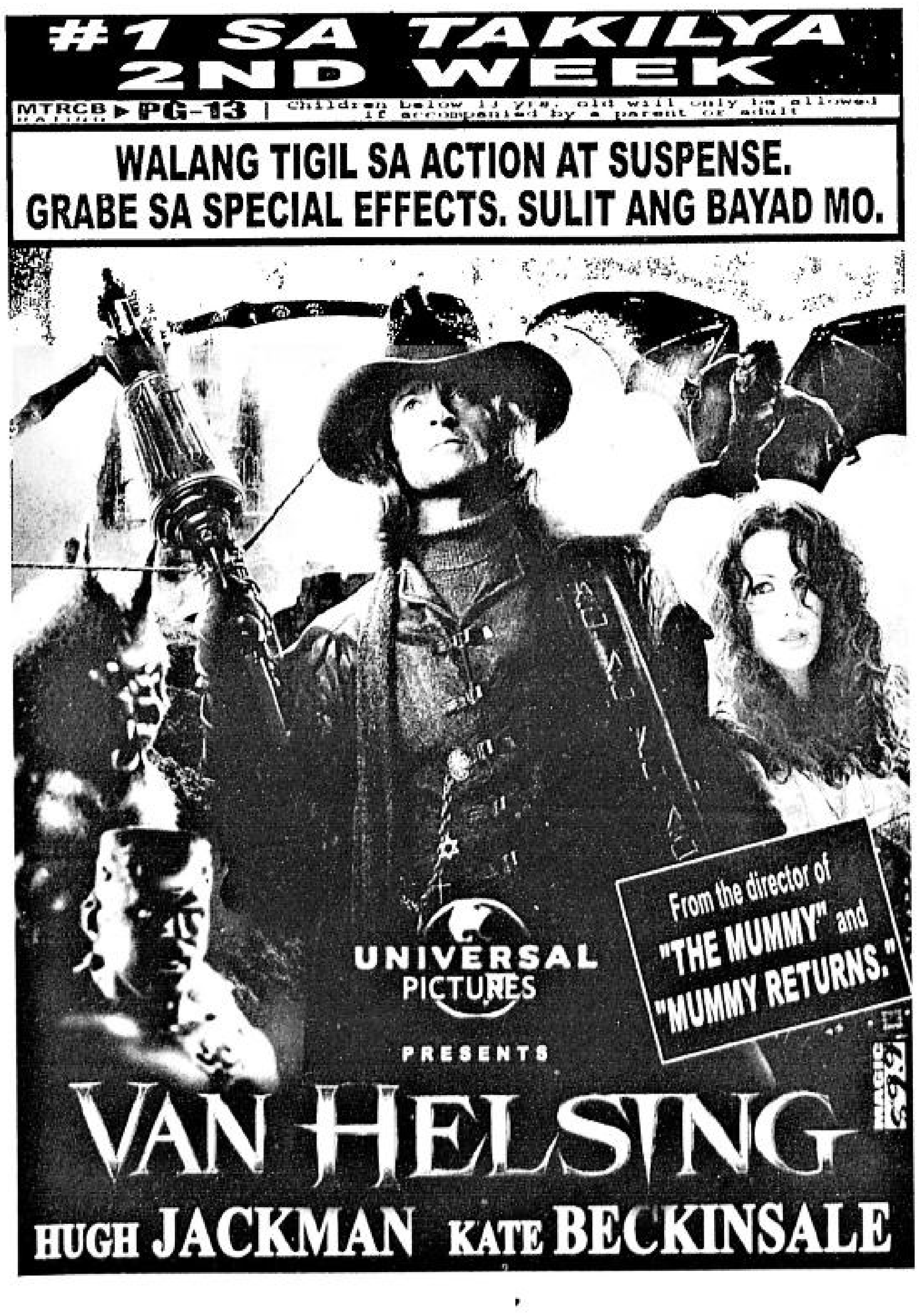
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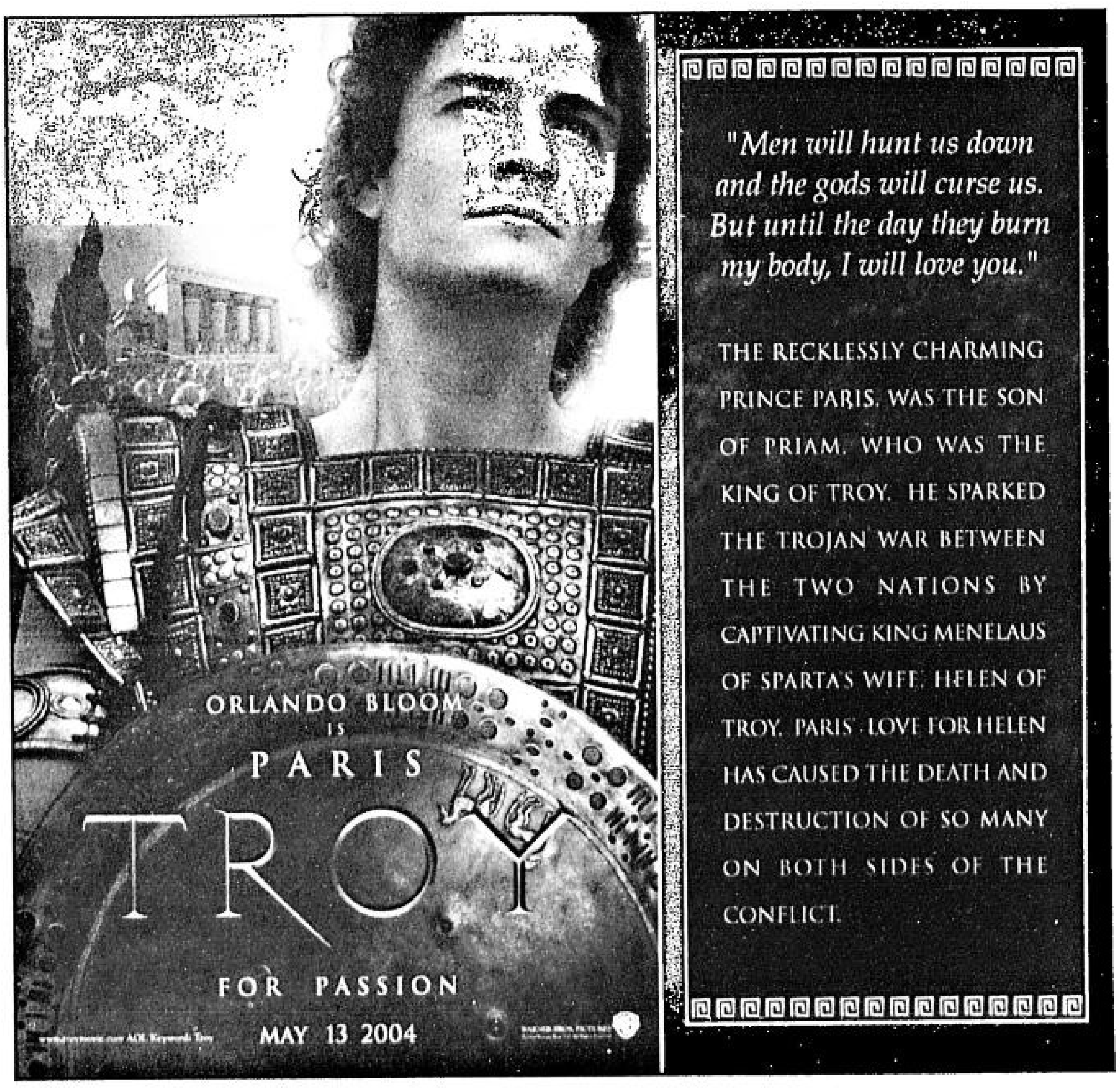
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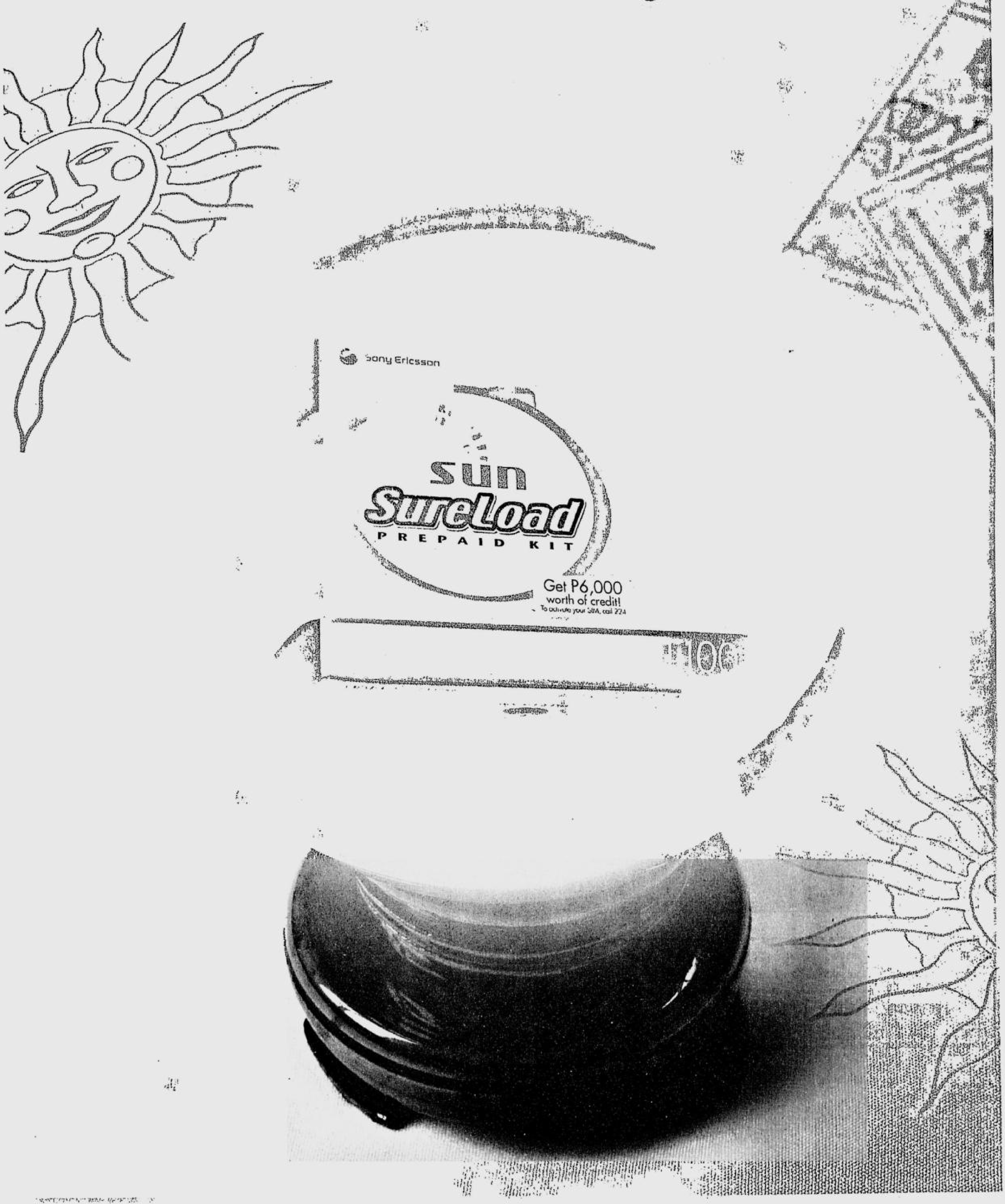

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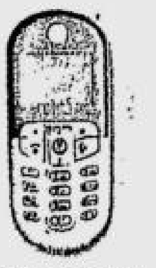

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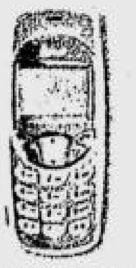

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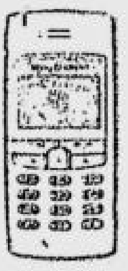

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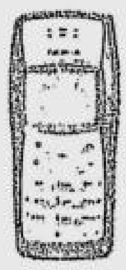

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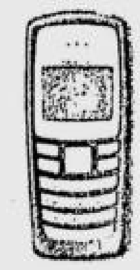

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ANDREA Bocelli created enough awareness of the man and the music so that even Pagsanjan folk screamed for him like a superstar.

The blind tenor has conquered Manila, but when is our culture establishment going to invest in neglected local talents?

THE ITALIAN singer with concert organizer Rosemarie Arenas

Lessons from Bocelli's visit

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE ANDREA Bocelli concert stole the thunder from the political front and made music history.

That concert broke the record for the biggest attendance ever for a concert devoted to operatic arias, art songs and Neapolitan favorites. While Pavarotti and Carreras sang to a 5,000-seater PICC in 1994, Bocelli filled up the 30,000-seater Araneta Coliseum.

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Meanwhile, what do we do with first-rate Filipino singers who have equally good, if not better, pianissimos than foreign artists and with just the same on even more powerful vocal power? Do we abandon them just because they can't get big-time managers who can persuade TV stations to gamble on Filipino talents?

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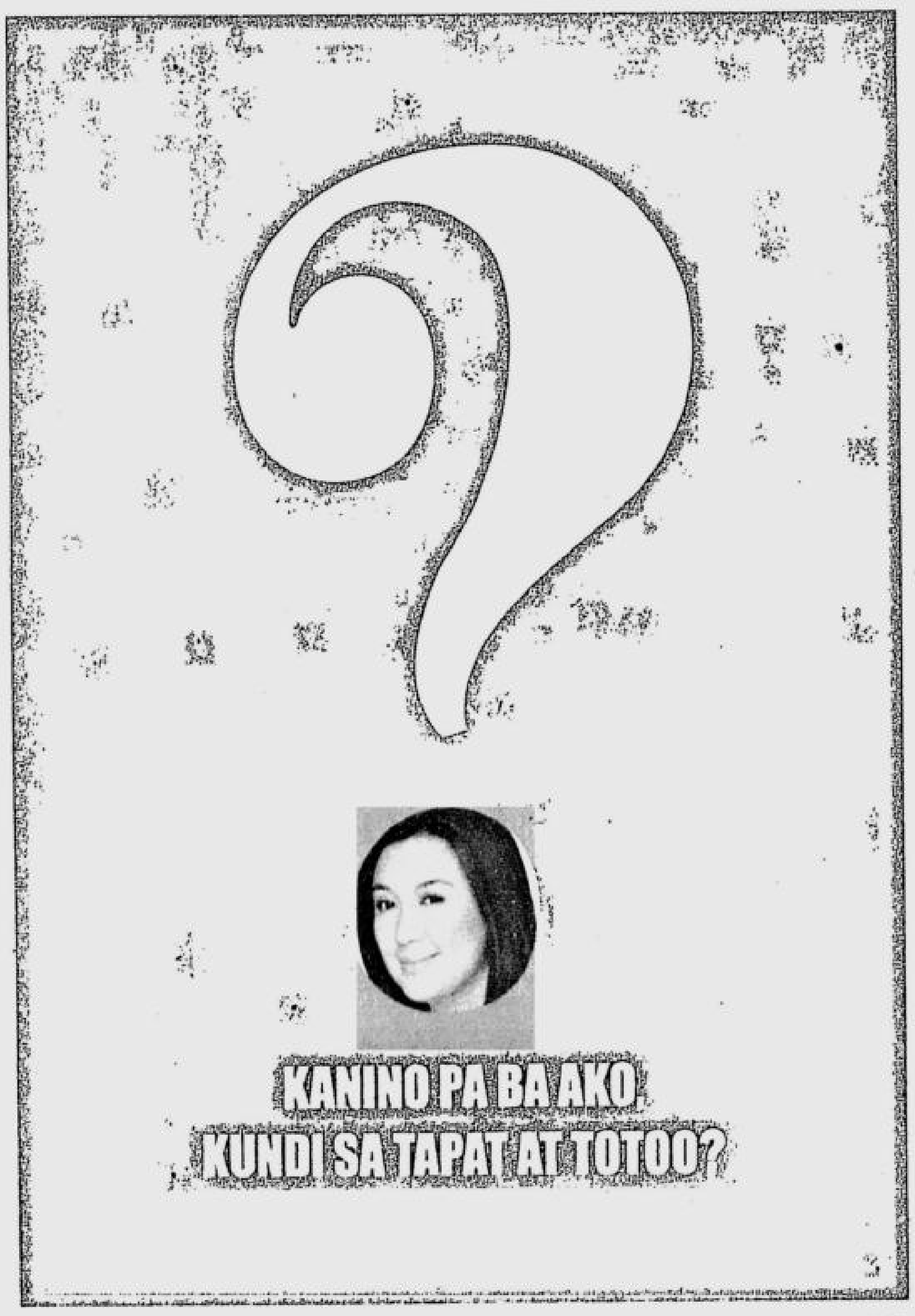
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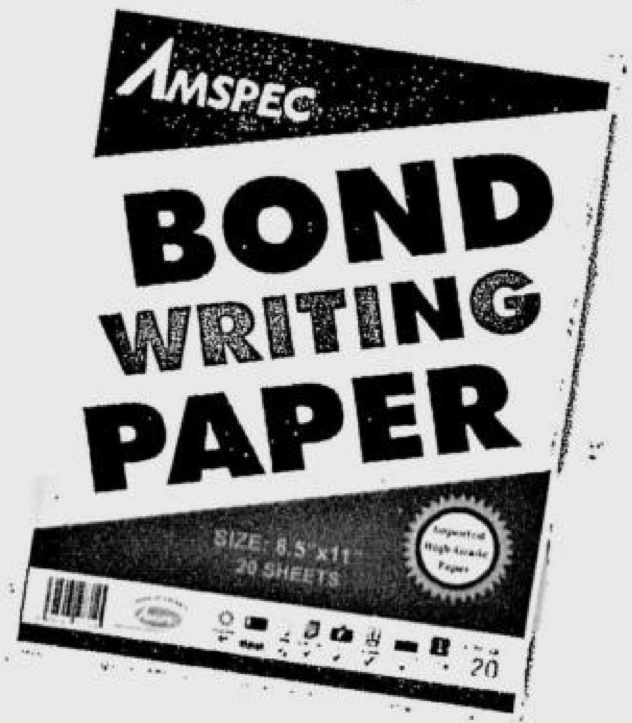

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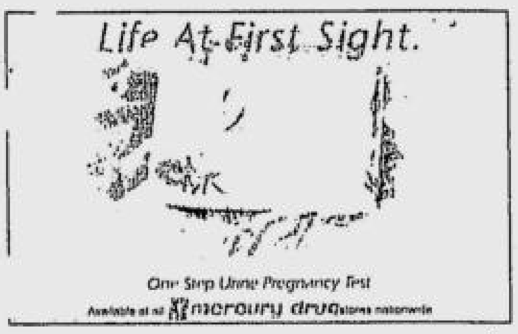
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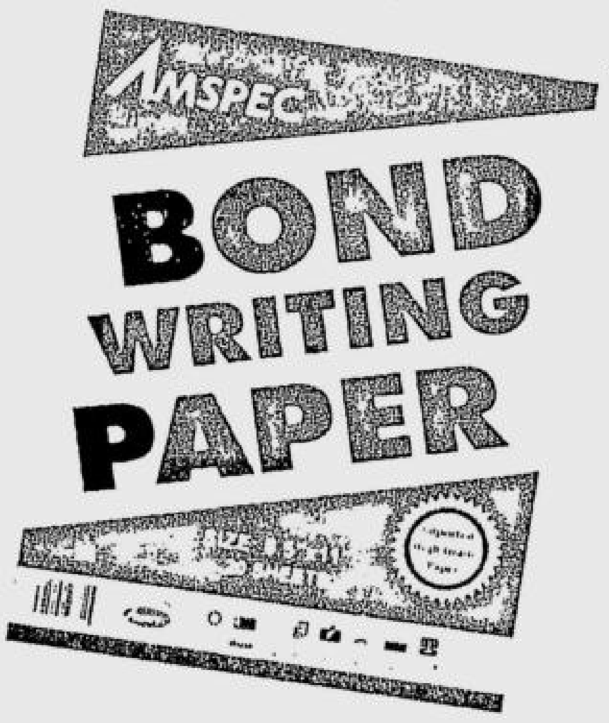

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AMSPEC

A young pianist to watch out for

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

WATCHING an 11-year-old gifted child take center stage and formidably play the piano before a predominantly mature, well-informed audience is certainly an enriching experience.

Customarily, the adults prod the child into obedience; but in this particular concert, it was a child who bewitched and hushed the adults to listen in awe. She stunned them as she ran her nimble fingers on the keyboard, dishing out contrasting styles from different periods of music history, from Baroque to contemporary.

In a special concert presented by the MCO Foundation at the Francisco Santiago Hall of the Equitable PCI Bank, Tower 1, Ma. Regina "Inna" P. Montesclaros held her listeners captive throughout, mesmerized as they were by her playing.

Fifth grader

Inna started studying the piano at five years old, under the tutelage of Prof. Cecile Basilio Roxas of Sta. Isabel College, who remains her teacher today. Two years ago, Inna bagged the second prize at the National Music Competition for Young Artists (Namcya) Category A-1.

She has performed in various programs, recitals and festivals, while studying at Colegio de San Agustin, where she will be in fifth grade this school year.

With clearly etched lines, matched with a brilliant singing tone and a big reservoir of stamina to undertake such a full concert, she became an instant darling of Manila's music lovers who came in droves to her concert.

Since her first recital, held in the same venue last year, her admirers have grown bigger by now. And with the quality of her playing, this is sure to increase even more in the days to come.

The program was meaty. For an intelligent, gifted child like Inna, playing a heavy program is not a problem at all. Leon Fleisher, one of the world's greatest concert pianists and pedagogues, had encouraged exposing gifted children to difficult works, for the simple reason that the mind of a gifted child is like a sponge that absorbs well.

Prelude and Fugue in C Minor and Flat Major (WTC 1) were an absorbing starter. Here, the young pianist showed a basic must for the pianist, a sensitive balance between the two hands in not only essaying melodic lines with harmonic support but also in clearly delineating contrapuntal lines.

Eleven-year-old Inna Montesclaros' amazing piano-playing marks her out as another child prodigy

Beethoven's Sonata in C Minor Op. 13, the "Pathetique," was played with dispatch. The young pianist underscored the dramatic import of the piece with a resonant introduction, grave, which was followed by a spirited allegro.

Here, the young pianist showed her adept left hand, specifically in the tremolo of the opening. She sang all the more in the second movement and finished the last movement with an assuring, confident poise.

High point

Inna's high point of playing was in Schubert's Impromptu in A Flat Major, No.4, Op. 90. The playing was direct and unpremeditated, with the lyrical section expressively done.

Lyrical expressiveness was also heard in San Pedro's "Salamisim" and in Abelardo's Chopinesque "Nocturne No. 1." It was also evident in the six Chopin Preludes Op. 28, Nos. 1,2,3,4, 6 and 7 and the Waltz in E Minor.

While wittily playful in Kasilag's "Scherzino," which she played with aplomb, she was introspective in Debussy's "La cathedrale engloutie" in evoking the rising of a submerged cathedral. Her rhythm did not falter, giving the listener a sense of continuity as her fingers carved out a wide range of tone.

At the end, Inna felt the triumph of her playing. She smiled immensely as she acknowledged the hearty applause that went on incessantly well after she had made the fourth curtain call.

Coming out to acknowledge each call with a wide smile, she held tightly to the bouquet, cueing the audience that she was not playing an encore. Indeed, why must she, after that fiery rendition of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee?"

Inna's proud parents are Edgardo and Merceditas Montesclaros.

Lessons from Bocelli's visit

From page F1

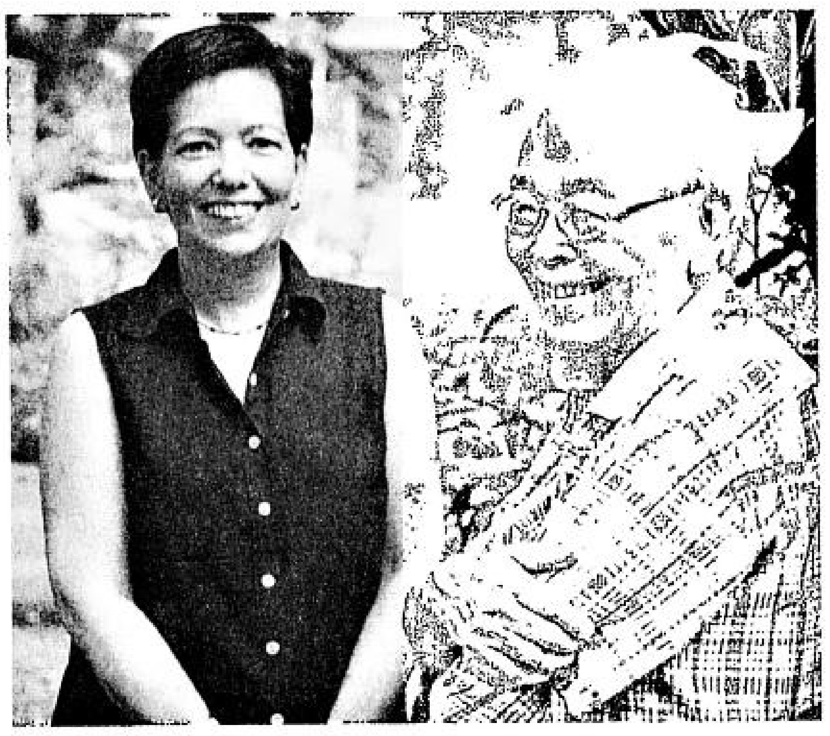
"Some good things in life should be shared and one of them is good music," she said. "It is enough for me that, at least for one night, Filipinos took a respite from politics to listen to real music."

Audiences and media persons will continue to cheer Arenas for her incredible feat as impresario. What everybody doesn't know (and I know this from experience) is that standing ovations and rave reviews don't wipe off concert deficits. Only ticket sales and sponsorships do.

Meanwhile, let's all start supporting Filipino talents who have the makings of future Pavarottis and Bocellis.

One such tenor is Namcya winner and UST Conservatory of Music professor Lemuel de la Cruz who will be heard in Baguio City on Saturday, May 15, 7 p.m., at the Camp John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, along with soprano Joan Cano, flutist GJ Herman Gomez, with pianist Mary Anne Espina.

Like Bocelli, De la Cruz will also sing "Lamento di Federico," and like Maria Luigia Borsi, Cano will also sing "Je veux vivre" from "Romeo et Juliette."



THE LATE National Artist for Music Jose Maceda (here with daughter) will be honored in a state necrological service at the CCP on May 13 at 9 a.m.

Cano's graduation recital at the UST Conservatory was the most impressive I had heard in a long, long time. She not only have the voice but also a very appealing Oriental look.

When you hear these Filipino talents sing without microphone at the Camp John Hay Cultural Center, you will realize that this country is still worth dying for even after today's crucial elections.

Here and there

My condolences to the family of Dr. Jose Maceda, National Artist for Music, who passed away last week.

Maceda must be the only Filipino pianist who studied under the legendary French pianist Alfred Cortot. At one time, Maceda coached Licad in the interpretation of Ravel pieces. (In Hong Kong, records of Licad, Rubinstein and Cortot are displayed on the same counter in a record store near the Hong Kong Cultural Center.)

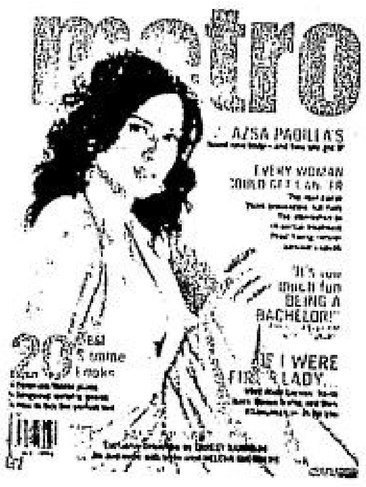
* * *

The full grand piano used by Licad in her Ravel concerto in Ayala and in her triumphant Baguio City return engagement is for sale. The baby grand she used at the Pasig Museum, where she obliged with seven encores, is also for sale. If you collect "pianos with concert tour history," these pianos are perfect collectors' items. Please call 0918-7376901 for details.

* * *

Music students and their families will be given complimentary tickets to the May 15 concert of tenor De la Cruz and soprano Cano in Baguio City. Call Music News at 0918-4061224.

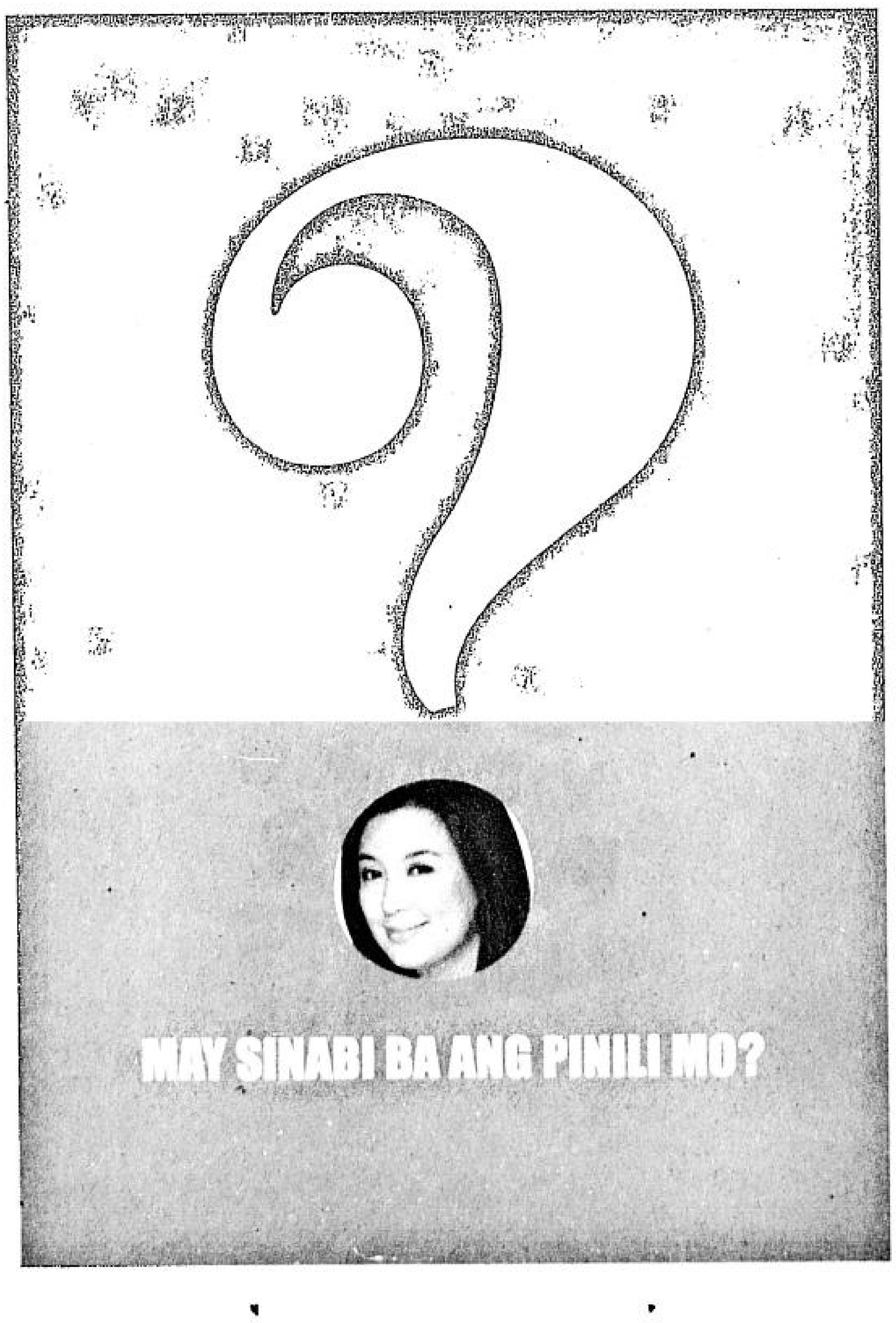
Would-be first ladies bare all in latest magazine issue



BEFORE you cast your vote today in the national elections, you might want to read up on the "presidentiable" wives in the latest issue of ABS-CBN Publishing's Metro magazine. Metro profiles all four future first ladies—FPJ's Susan Roces, Bro. Eddie's Dory Villanueva, Raul's Sonia Roco and, Alice, the elusive wife of Ping Lacson.

Also in the issue are stories on Zsazsa Padilla, who's fitter and more fascinating than she's ever been in years as she talks about shaping up, turning 40 and almost marrying Dolphy; and Helena Guerrero, whose flamboyant fashion label Azabache was all the rage in the '70s, and who updates us on her intriguing life and times in an exclusive interview.

The May issue of Metro is available in leading newsstands and magazine outlets nationwide.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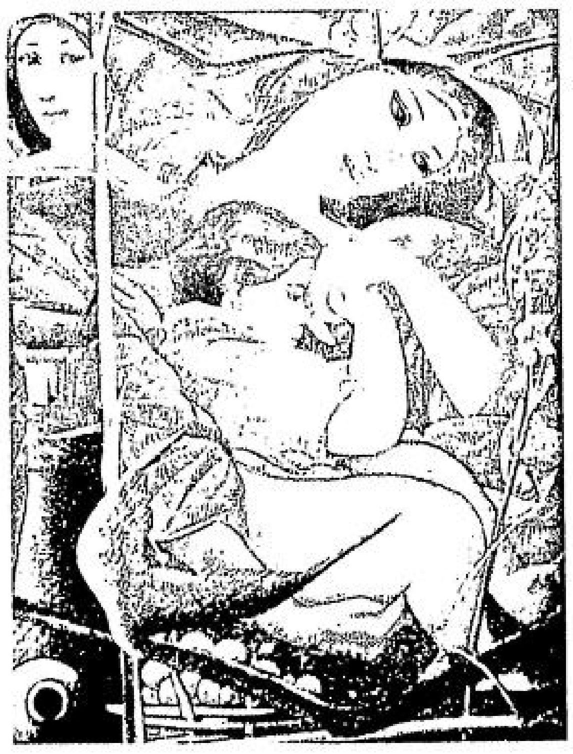
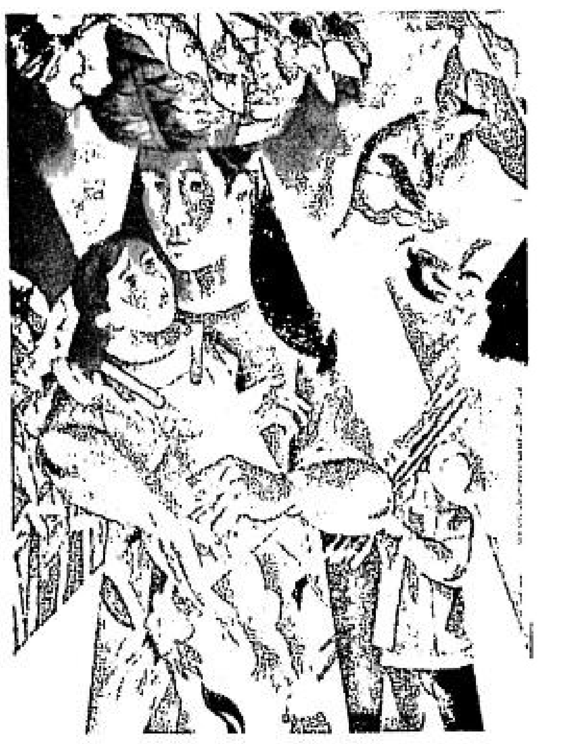


"MOTHER and Child," by Tam Austria



"MOTHER and Child of the Farm," by Angelito Antonio

Exhibit pays homage to mothers

GALERIE Joaquin is holding "Tribute to Mothers" until May 23 at the B-12 and B-13 lower ground floor of The Podium.

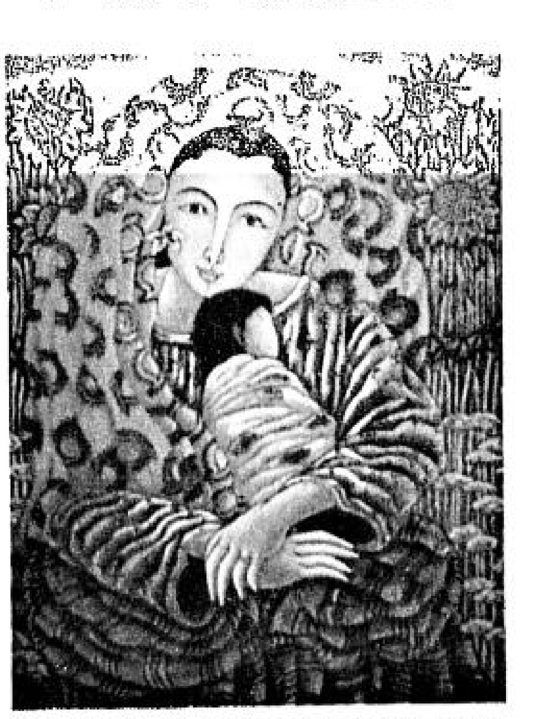
The exhibit shows 25 works by Tam Austria, Angelito Antonio, Mario Parial, Antonio Austria, Hermes Alegre, Dominic Rubio, Bernard Vista, Richard Arimado and Ramon Orlina.

Before his departure for Eastern Europe, Austria made a painting especially for the exhibit—of a robust child blessing the hand of her loving mother—"Mother and Child" (Paggalang sa Ina). Parial's work is "Mother Embracing Child"—painted like an icon with gold leaf accents.

Antonio presents a new exploration in the world of color with his "Mother and Child of the Farm."

Rubio presents the touching "Ang Pamilya" while Bernard Vista presents a Cubist interpretation of the Mother and Child in a Filipino setting.

Call 7239253 or 7239418.



"MOTHER Embracing Child," by Mario Parial

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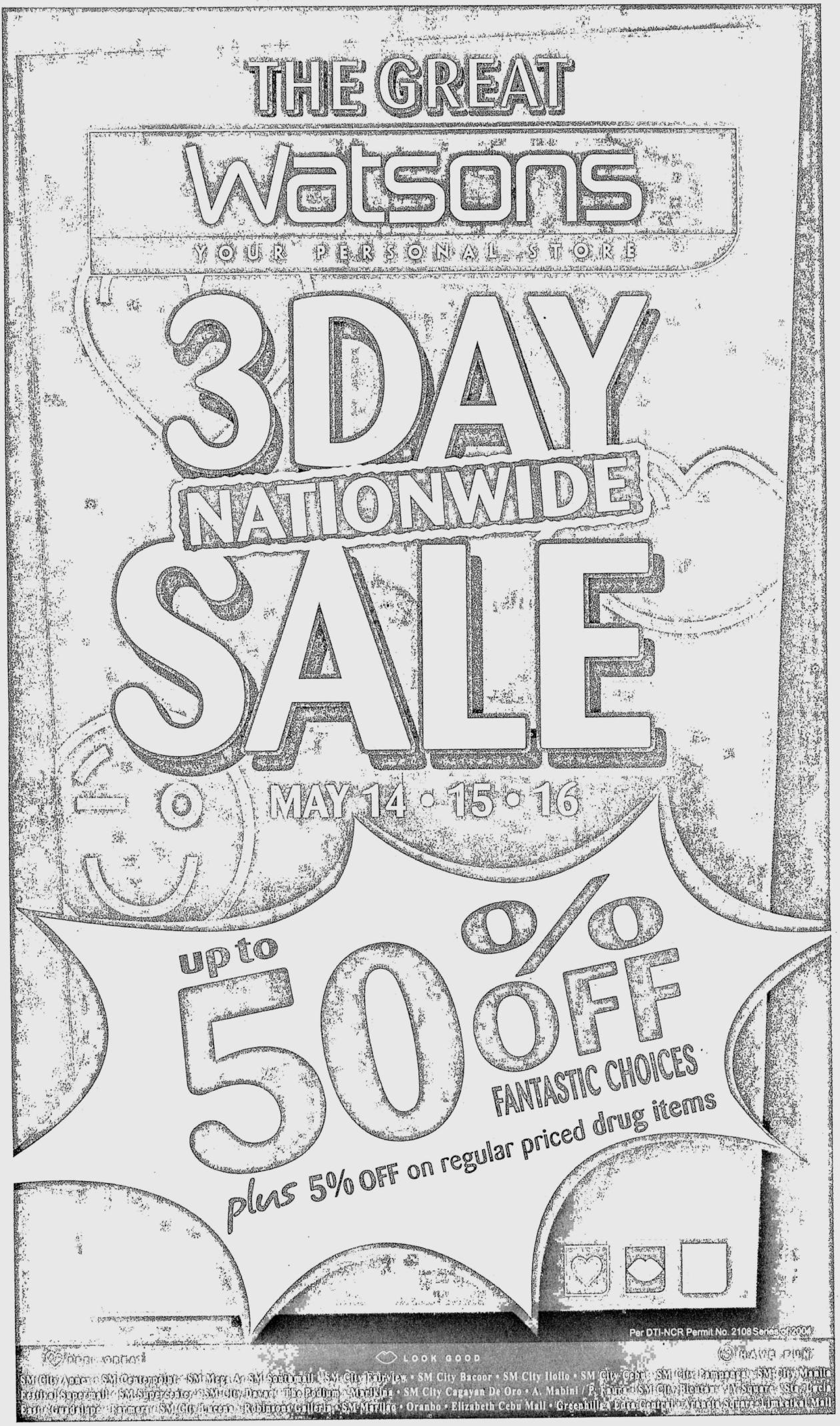

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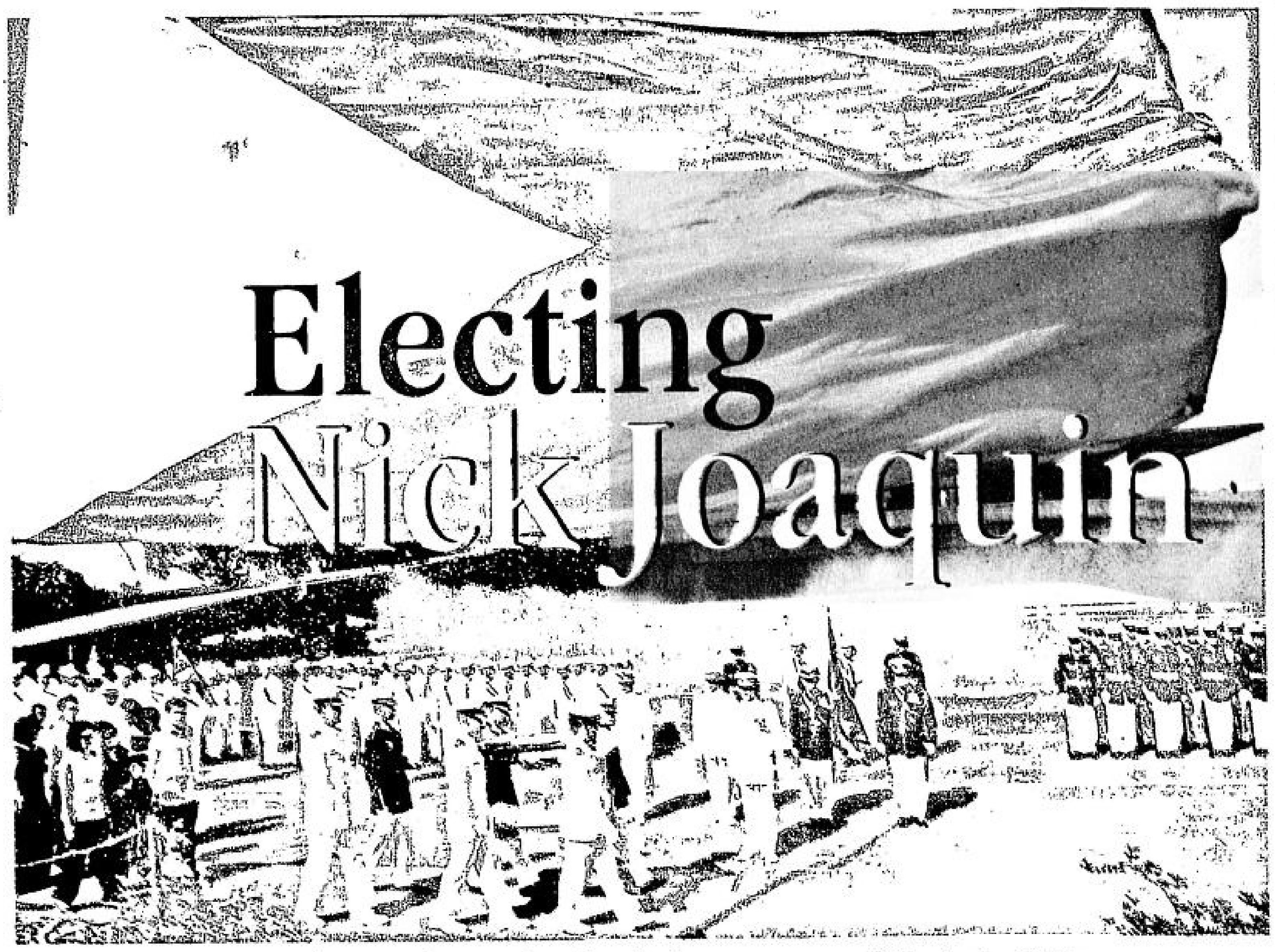
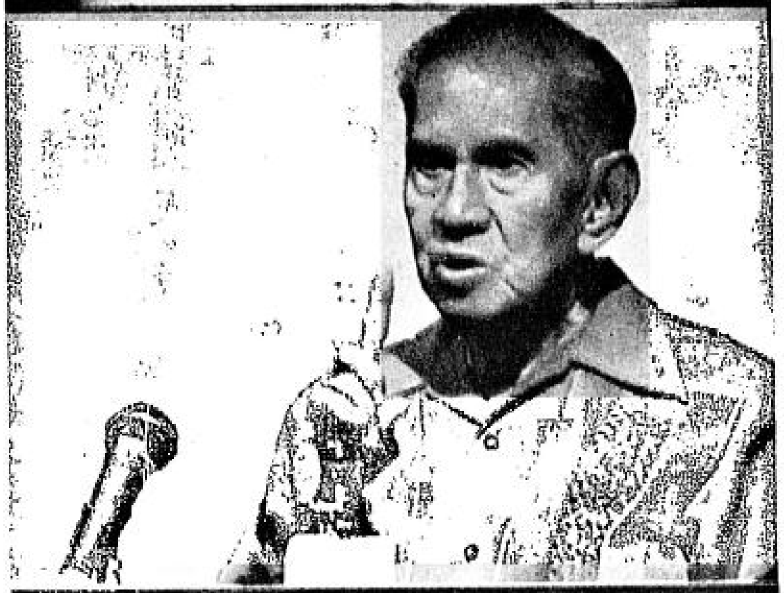
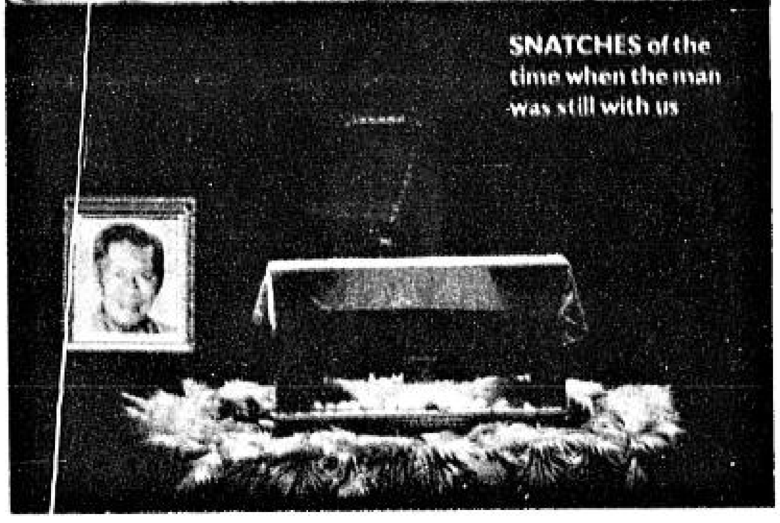
LIFESTYLE

MANILA and Macao reconnect /G4

Electing Nick Joaquin







SNATCHES of the time when the man was still with us

The state necrological service had the pomp and pageantry of his magnificent prose. But he was a very modest man, averse to praise and attention

Nick Joaquin
Pambansang Alagad ng Sining
Para sa Panitikan
1976

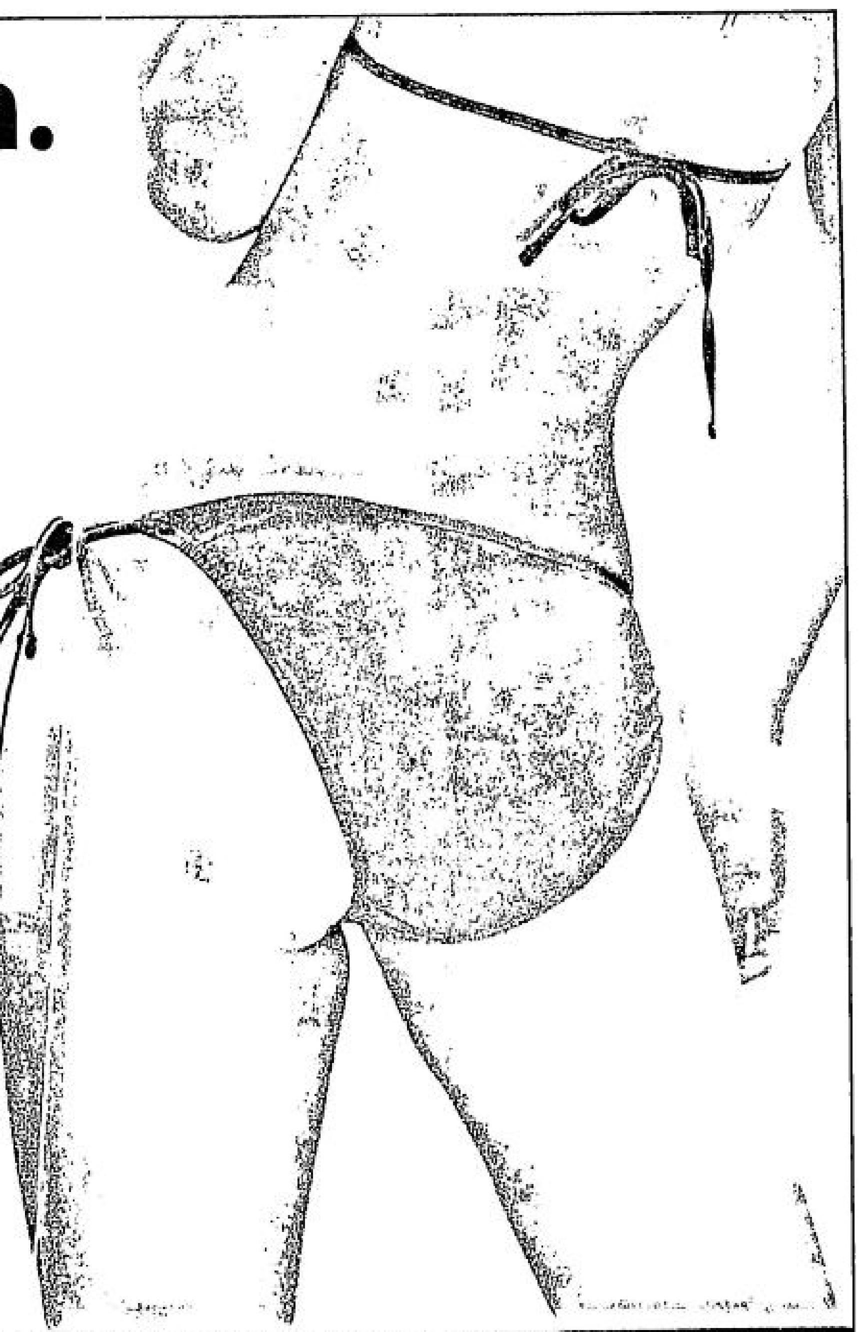
By Constantino C. Tejero
Photos by Erik Arazas

FOR someone who straddles Philippine literature like a colossus, he was a surprisingly modest man. He would have anticipated the frills and drama, but only God knows how his spirit must have reacted to the tributes of peers, colleagues, fans, family and friends at the Cultural Center of the Philippines that mid-morning of May 2, only three days after his death.

"Pagdadalamhati ng Bayan," the state necrological service for National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin (May 4, 1917-April 29, 2004), appropriately honored the greatest Filipino writer who ever lived. Organized by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the rites were held at Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo.

By 8 a.m., the CCP Main Theater lobby was already swarming with mourners waiting for the man's remains to arrive from Santuario de San Antonio in Makati. Friends who never saw one another for years met again to pay respect to him whom three generations of writers considered everybody's parent.

ELECTING/ G4



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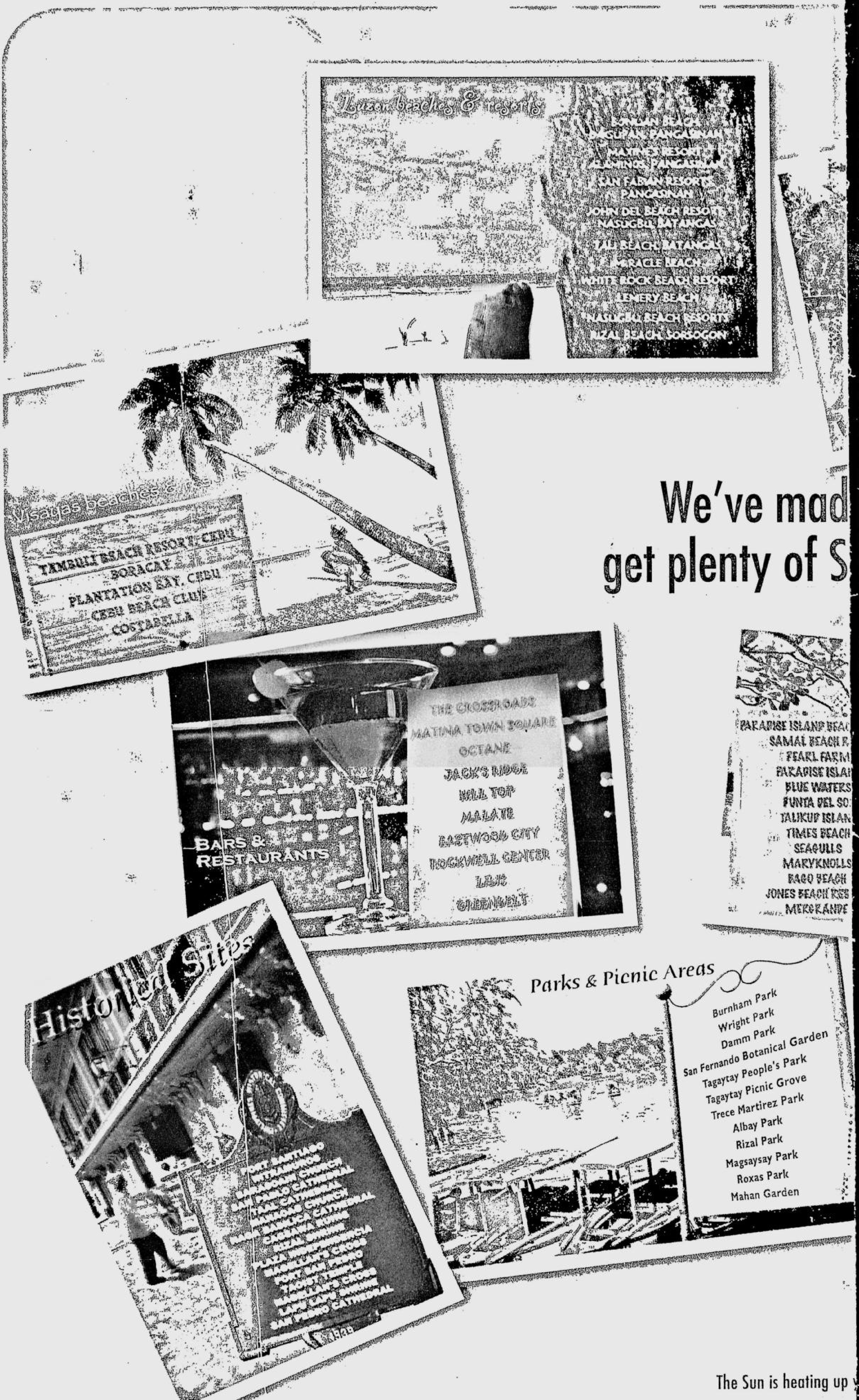
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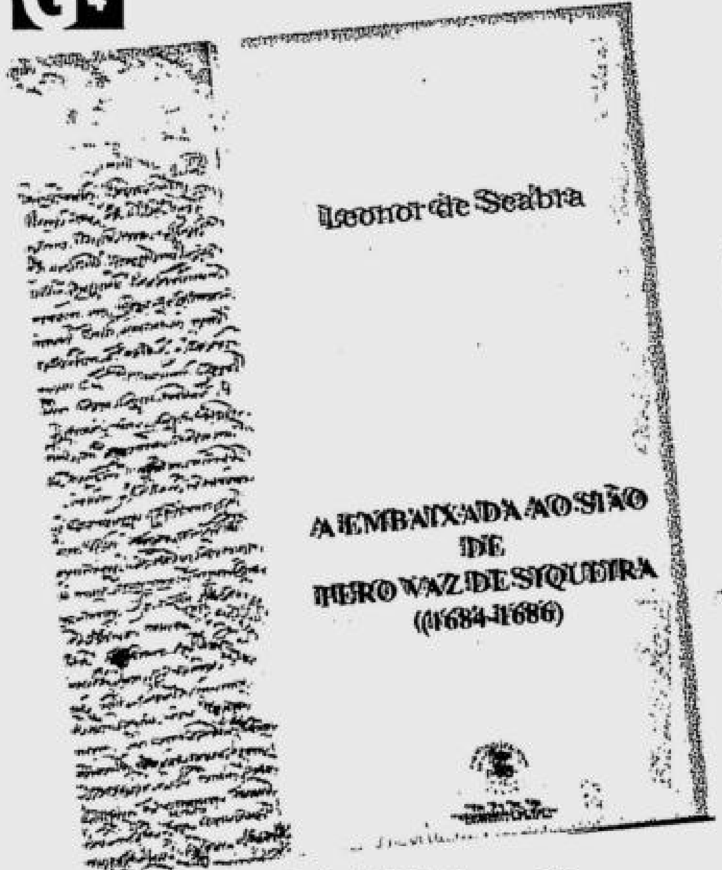
Recovering the forgotten songs from the Portuguese

A scholarly conference in Macao tries to rebuild the historic links between Portugal and the Philippines



ONE of the books launched during the conference

By Lucio P. Gutierrez, OP
Contributor

MY FIRST visit to Macao was in 1974. At that time, Macao was a dormant colony of Portugal.

In 1999, after more than 400 years under Portuguese rule, it passed to China, just two years after the neighboring British colony of Hong Kong had done the same.

Both Hong Kong and Macao belong to China, but the central government from Beijing has allowed them great freedom to master their own affairs. Two systems, one nation.

Recently I was given the chance to fly once more to Macao. The changes I found are many and breathtaking. As soon as the plane lands in the new Macao International Airport on the island of Taipa, one can see the tremendous improvements that have taken place.

Macao has become a tourist attraction. Life revolves around gambling and the casinos. They are the lifeblood of the city. But Macao has many and more beautiful things to offer.

The purpose of my visit was to take part in a gathering of historians and scholars from the Philippines, Portugal, Macao and Hong Kong. The theme of the conference was "Macao-Philippines: Historical Relations."

It was, in fact, the third annual meeting of historians interested in the role played by Portugal in Asia in the past centuries, and the great contribution of that small nation to the making of Asia. More concretely, it tackled Portugal's contribution to the making of the Philippines. Similar conferences were held in Manila in 2002 and 2003.

The moving spirit behind the conference was the ambassador of Portugal to the Philippines, Joao Caetano da Silva.

PORTUGUESE Ambassador Joao Caetano da Silva

Early Portuguese contacts

Portugal's contacts with the Philippines started well before the arrival of Spain to the Philippine archipelago.

Soon after the great encounter between Magellan, himself a Portuguese and the greatest navigator of all times, and the early Filipinos, in 1521, and before the arrival of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in Cebu in 1565, Portuguese explorers, navigators and traders from the Moluccas Islands reached the shores of Mindanao. They interacted and traded with the natives, starting the contact on Philippine soil between East and West.

CENTRAL Plaza of Macao (with historical buildings). In front: Regalado Trota José of the National Museum of the Philippines, and Juan O. Mesquida of the University of Asia. Back row: Philippine Star correspondent and UST Prof. Cynthia Rivera, Ateneo Prof. Francis A. Gealogo, UP Prof. Bernardita Churchill and Prof. Eloisa de Castro

THE IMPOSING ruins of the St. Paul's Church façade, originally of the Jesuits

The historical conference in Macao tried to clarify some issues connected with the early voyages of discovery of Asia carried out by the Europeans, and accelerate the process of historical rapprochement between the Philippines and Portugal.

We were a small group of historians from the Philippines: Bernardita Churchill of the University of the Philippines (also president of the Philippine National Historical Society); José Arcilla, SJ, director of the Jesuit Archives in the Philippines; Francis A. Gealogo of Ateneo de Manila University; Cynthia Rivera and Eloisa de Castro from the University of Santo Tomas; Regalado Trota José from the National Museum of the Philippines; and Juan O. Mesquida from the University of Asia and the Pacific.

A much larger group came from Portugal.

The conference was held at University of Macao, one of the organizers together with the Portuguese Center for Studies of Southeast Asia (Cepesa) of Lisbon. Macao Millennium College and the Institute of European Studies of Macao were the main sponsors.

What are the reasons for the silence on Portugal's early contact with the Philippines? Where are the sources so that we can, at least, write that chapter of Philippine history that could be titled "Portuguese-Philippine Relations before the Arrival of Spain"?

Scholars are trying to open new ways to study the relations of Portugal, Macao and the Philippines in order to discover new avenues of information along which students can travel in search of knowledge and for historical understanding.

These gatherings bring nations closer, make available for students and scholars the rich cultural and historical wealth of nations that share today a common destiny in the age of globalization.

The keynote speech, "Philippine Historical Writing on Macao, Portuguese, Philippines Relations: Agenda for Research and Collaboration," delivered by Professor Churchill, was an attempt to find ways to fill the vacuum of source materials for students of Philippine-Portuguese history. The vacuum is a challenge for historians and an agenda for scholars.

Portugal is a tiny country in the concourse of nations. Yesterday it was daring. Today it is so unknown in the Philippines.

Macao may be a small place, but yesterday it was the meeting point between East and West. Today it is a land of promise where East and West still meet.

More than casinos

Macao is more than casinos, games and gambling. Macao is culture, art, history, religion and more. A melting pot of cultures and of people from different places and backgrounds, living together in peace.

Macao in the past centuries was meant to be a door to China. Perhaps no more than a window to look through at the mighty, mysterious Grand Cathay of Marco Polo.

Yesterday China was mysterious in history and a sleeping giant. Today it is a galloping nation with an unparalleled industrial growth. Very soon a superpower.

Macao, with its beautiful hills, well-preserved colonial houses, plazas, palaces, forts, towers, museums and churches, is irresistible to the tourist. A unique experience for the lover of history.

In the past, Hong Kong exercised a strong spell for Westerners. It outdistanced and outshone Macao. Financially and demographically, Hong Kong looked mighty.

But China has other Hong Kongs. Today Shanghai has become like Hong Kong. The former British colony can be duplicated and will be duplicated anywhere in China.

PROFESSOR Vitor Texeira from the Catholic University of Oporto, Portugal, with the author

But there is only one Macao. Unique, inviting, friendly. Small, clean, accessible.

Air Macao invites you to Macao, which, with its colonial past and modern architecture, cannot be duplicated. China knows it. So that the effort to preserve it is there. And the will. And, of course, the money.

Macao walk

Nothing enables a man more to know a place, feel its rhythm, discover its beauty, be conquered by its appeal than a walk—a leisurely walk in the old style, before cars became a hindrance to human living in many cities today.

I made that walk. I discovered that people walk and stroll in Macao even in the middle of the night. They chattered in the plazas and public parks. I saw women returning home in the early hours of the morning. We were assured that Macao was one of the safest places in the world. It was clearly one of the cleanest.

Some 12 million tourists come to Macao each year. And the number keeps on growing. Most of them from mainland China. Macao wants to become the Las Vegas of Asia.

The Macao Tourism Department hosted a dinner for the conference at the Friendship Tower, which stands high and proud in the port of the city. From the top, one can have a superb view of all sides of the city and of adjacent islands.

One more thing: this touches the very heart of the Philippines today. Macao has welcomed a large number of Filipino overseas workers. We found them everywhere. Most of them are well-educated, fluent in English, a clear advantage over other manpower. Migrant Filipinos in Macao, as anywhere else, are great contributors to the economy and life of the city.

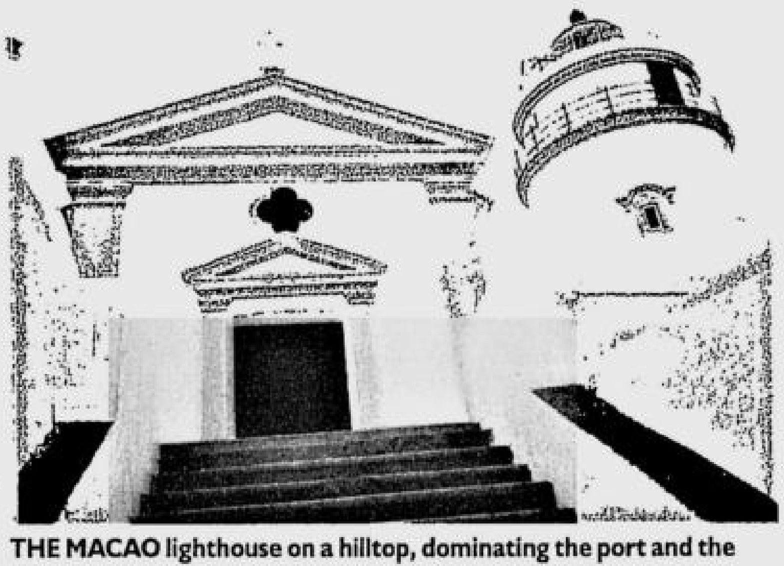
I left Macao with a heavy heart. So many things to see, so little time. At the departure area of the airport, many of the employees supervising the baggage were Filipinos, polite, helpful and alert.

The early flight from Macao to Manila that day was full of Filipinos. Most of them were *balikbayans*. Bad politics, mismanagement of resources, corruption in government, high unemployment, pitiful salaries have forced them to leave home.

These exiles build the country and keep it afloat. The Philippine government calls them the heroes of the modern world. Yes, no doubt. But the story of their tears and sorrows, of their shattered dreams and broken families remain to be told.

Traveling has always been educational. It brings you into closer contact with unknown or little known exotic worlds. It enables you to be touched by welcoming people and unexpected things.

"One who has traveled a great deal, and a man of wide experience, will talk soundly. A person who has not had trials knows very little. But the traveled man is competent in many ways. I have made many discoveries in my travels and understood more than I can express" (Sirach, 34:9-12).



THE MACAO lighthouse on a hilltop, dominating the port and the adjacent islands

---

Electing Nick Joaquin

From page G1

And when he did arrive, it was in the white heat of day, borne in an urn by military men in white gala uniform marching solemnly to a brass band from the CCP grounds up the curving ramp—precisely the kind of custom and ceremony he would have loved.

The Main Theater was filled to near capacity, the volume of audience usually drawn only by rock stars. A hush fell, and a prayer was led by Rev. Fr. James B. Reuter, S.J.

CCP chair Emily Abrera, herself just undergoing a death in the family, gave the welcome remarks.

The audio-visual presentation that followed was one of the most poignant moments in the ceremony, as the documentary showed snatches of the time when the man was still with us.

The elect

It also showed a scene from National Artist Lamberto Avellana's film version of Joaquin's play "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino," where Bitoy Camacho (Vic Silayan) first lays eyes on the legendary portrait while being explained to by the Marasigan sisters Paula (Naty Crame-Rogers and Candida (National Artist Daisy Hontiveros Avellana).

This scene is particularly important as it states a constant theme of Joaquin: tradition carried over by the young to the ineluctable present.

Equally important was the docu's voice-over of the citation when Joaquin was declared National Artist in 1976. It was written in heightened language and a rush of words that approaches Joaquin's.

It reads in part: "Using words for stones and his enamored memory for a map, he built us again our poor dear City from the black ashes of war. Against fire, against the salamanders of slow decay, removed from vandals, transcending poverty, floods, earthquakes and oblivion, in his drama and pageantry, this master builder erected Manila anew—Intramuros, the Parian, the *arrabales* of Paco, Binondo, Santa Cruz, Tondo and beyond. Without owning one handful of earth, he has made us heirs of the richest realm...

"His poems soar high above all the imagery of our earth. When he writes, he is saint, genius, poet laureate, juggler, magician, a Pierrot priest performing a trapeze Mass before our astounded eyes...

"In this upside-down world where a cathedral becomes a Tatarin floor, Nick Joaquin does not need our blessings. He is the elect. Like a gallant consul in shirtsleeves handing our passports and visas, he bids us all—lepers, stowaways, archbishops, jazz-band players, rat-catchers, dog-eaters, a woman who said she had two navels—many more blessed to enter into the Paradise of his prose and poetry."

It's hard to talk of the man without exaggerating a bit, but it's all too true. He is that beloved.

The hero

Another moving moment was the flower offering of his fellow National Artists, to the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's rendition of National Artist Francisco Santiago's "Ave Maria," arranged and conducted by Cecinio Ronquillo.

A few of them were still frisky, but some were doddering, as each went upstage and laid white anthurium bracts by the urn: Napoleon Abueva (Sculpture), Virgilio Almario (Literature), Daisy Hontiveros Avellana (Theater), Salvador Bernal (Theater Design), Leonor Orosa Goquingco (Dance), F. Sionil José (Literature), Arturo Luz (Visual Arts), Andrea Veneracion (Music).

Eugene Villaluz sang "Hindi Simple ang Buhay," a solo from "Ang Larawan," the musical adaptation of "Portrait," with libretto by National Artist Rolando Tinio and music by Ryan Cayabyab.

Actor Nonie Buencamino delivered Bitoy Camacho's valediction.

The final tributes came from what Joaquin would have considered family.

José gave a stately speech, from time to time pausing to take a deep breath, meditate, or maybe choke a sob.

Painter Danny Dalena delivered his with a dramatic flourish, then couldn't help but turn jelly toward the end.

Writer José F. Lacaba tried to be casual (and those were funny anecdotes, too), but he couldn't hide the pain.

As response, Cecile Joaquin-Yasay, after thanking everybody, delivered a series of farewells to her ever-avuncular uncle.

During the recessional, when National Artist Nicanor Abelardo's "Pahimakas" was being played, there was constant weeping, in the hall, through the corridors, even in the toilets, as peers, colleagues, fans, family and friends were sending off the man to Libingan ng Mga Bayani, where he would be accorded a hero's burial. He would have turned 87 two days later.

Home is the sailor, home from the sea—and the hunter home from the hill...

DANNY Dalena reenacts a familiar Joaquin gesture.

- **Entertainment / A27** Fil-Am in 'AI' all-girl fight
- **Business / B1** Ecozone investments up 249% to P22.4B
- **News / A2** 4 exit polls, 3 winners
- **News / A2** Absentee voters turnout is 65%, says Comelec
- **Sports / A21** Pacquiao protest set as judge admits error
- **Tanong ng Bayan / A20** Sa mata ng dayuhan, maayos ba ang halalan? PISTA O PULTIKA? MAMAYA SA ABC 5

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Voter No. 84 came by chopper

VOTER No. 84 arrived from Malacañang by presidential chopper at the Lubao Central Elementary School in Barangay San Nicolas 1, Lubao, Pampanga, and took only five minutes to complete her ballot yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was scheduled to vote at the opening hour in her father's

VOTER/ A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

One voted in a toilet; one voted in air-con comfort

By Volt Contreras and Blanche S. Rivera

ONE walked, the other alighted from a luxury car.

One wore rubber slippers, the other, riding boots.

One voted in a dark toilet, the other, in an air-conditioned hall illuminated by chande-

ONE VOTED/ A17

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, May 11, 2004 ★★★ 46 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 153 P18 website: www.inq7.net

PANFILO LACSON, 8:05 a.m.
Bayang Luma Elementary School
Imus, Cavite.

FERNANDO POE JR., 7:20 a.m.
Xavier School
San Juan, Metro Manila

SN. NICOLAS 1ST

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, 9:45 a.m.
Lubao Central Elementary School
Lubao, Pampanga

RAUL ROCO, 9:30 a.m.
Sta. Cruz Elementary School
Naga City

EDDIE VILLANUEVA, 8:45 a.m.
Bunlo Elementary School
Bocaue, Bulacan

GMA, FPJ in tight race

Surprise: Loren widens lead over Noli in early quick count

By Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe Jr. were neck and neck in the presidential race as of last night, according to partial and unofficial results of a quick count being conducted by a private computer school.

As of 10:35 p.m., Ms Macapagal had 215,671 votes, while Poe had 213,564 votes.

In the vice presidential race, Loren Legarda was ahead of Noli de Castro. Legarda had 299,357 votes and De Castro, 264,040. Hermie Aquino had 41,073.

It was a see-saw battle with the lead changing almost by the hour. Ms Macapagal was ahead at 7:56 p.m. by 822 votes, but Poe overtook her at 10 p.m. by 2,547 votes.

The quick count by AMA Education System showed Panfilo Lacson in third place, followed by Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva. Lacson had 103,197 votes, Roco, 55,122 and, Villanueva, 53,511.

The votes came from 10,759 precincts, representing 3.6 percent of the total of 295,459 precincts nationwide.

Karim Bangcola, AMA executive president, said the 10,759 precincts were located in 62 towns and cities in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

AMA is conducting the quick count for "Eleksyon 2004," the coverage of the local and national elections by GMA 7, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inq7.net, PLDT, Smart, Catholic Media Network, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, dzBB and New Media Inc.

AMA is owned by Amable Aguiluz V, presidential consultant on computer education during the Estrada administration. But Aguiluz is widely believed to be supporting Ms Macapagal.

The partial results came from Butuan, Legazpi, Balanga, Batangas City, Lipa, Nasugbu, Batangas, Baguio, Tagbilaran, City of Valencia, Malolos, Meycauayan in Bulacan,Tuguegarao, Iriga, Naga City, Roxas City, Bacoor in Cavite, Dasmariñas in Cavite, Cebu City, Lapu-lapu and Mandaue.

Cotabato City, Davao City, Laoag, Iloilo City, City of Santiago, City of San Fernando, Biñan in Laguna, Calamba, San Pablo City, San Pedro in Laguna, Santa Cruz in Laguna, Tacloban, Cagayan de Oro, Manila, Caloocan, Las Piñas, Makati, Mandaluyong, Muntinlupa, Parañaque, Pasig, Quezon City, San Juan in Metro Manila, Valenzuela City, Bacolod and Dumaguete.

Cabanatuan, Gapan, Puerto Princesa, Angeles, San Fernando City in Pampanga, City of Alaminos, Urdaneta, Dagupan, Lucena, Antipolo, Cainta in Rizal, City of Sorsogon, General Santos, City of Tarlac, Olongapo and Zamboanga City.

Bangcola said AMA's quick count would only last for 48 hours in line with the agreement it entered into with its partners in "Eleksyon 2004."

The election results were collected from the precincts by 15,000 AMA-trained volunteer students from 200 campuses of AMA and its sister schools.

Roving volunteer students progressively retrieved early tally results as they

GMA/ A8

ELEKSYON 2004

QUICK COUNT (PARTIAL, UNOFFICIAL)

As of 10:35 p.m., May 10, 2004

		AMA 10,759 out of 295,459 precincts
	PRESIDENT	
1	Macapagal-Arroyo, Gloria M.	215,671
2	Poe, Fernando Jr. K.	213,564
3	Lacson, Panfilo M.	103,197
4	Roco, Raul S.	55,122
5	Villanueva, Eduardo	53,511
	VICE PRESIDENT	
1	Legarda, Loren B.	299,357
2	De Castro, Noli L.	264,040
3	Aquino, Herminio S.	41,073
4	Pajo, Rodolfo T.	3,102
	SENATORS	
1	Roxas, Mar Manuel II A.	391,828
2	Pimentel, Aquilino, Jr. Q.	304,390
3	Lim, Alfredo S.	302,232
4	Gordon, Richard J	301,923
5	Madrigal, Jamby A.S.	285,000
6	Revilla, Bong Ramon Jr. B.	276,573
7	Santiago, Miriam D.	266,898
8	Cayetano, Pia Juliana S.	264,026
9	Enrile, Juan P.	260,076
10	Biazon, Rodolfo G.	250,741
11	Estrada, Jinggoy E.	231,602
12	Barbers, Robert Z.	222,880
13	Maceda, Ernesto M.	220,120
14	Lapid, Manuel M.	200,677
15	Mercado, Orlando S.	179,525
16	Osmeña, John Henry R.	177,484
17	Anson-Roa, Ma.Elisa Boots C.	169,917
18	Tatad, Francisco S.	141,572
19	Chavez, Frank I.	141,568
20	Jaworski, Robert S.	136,715

Complaints from voters, teachers swamp Comelec

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections was tested yesterday, and was found sorely wanting.

Whether in slum area or exclusive village, urban area or countryside, complaints of missing voters' names, ballots missing or sent to the wrong places, ballot switching and snatching, the presence of armed goons, problems with indelible ink, lack of poll precincts, and the omission of certain candidates' names flew thick and fast.

The Comelec's dismal preparations for the polls also took up much of the complaints relayed to the Department of Education by teachers serving as election inspectors.

Aivan Amit, officer in charge of the DepEd's first-ever election task force, said 70 percent of the calls it received from teachers involved complaints against the Comelec.

Most had to do with the lack or shortage of election paraphernalia, defective stamp pads, missing pages in the election return forms, shortage of ballots and—the most common complaint—missing names in the book of voters or the computerized voters' list, Amit said. ***(See related stories in Across the Nation, Page A15)***

He said the rest of the calls were about problems that the teachers had encountered or observed, such as alleged vote-buying.

But when asked to assess the day at around noon yesterday, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said: "So far, so good."

But he admitted that there was the usual problem of voters unable to find their polling precincts. Abalos also read a prepared statement in which he said the significance of the elections should not be downplayed by the "weaknesses of humans."

"I think there has been a little more confusion than usual owing to the problems with the voters' lists," said Bill Luz, secretary general of the National Movement for Free Elections.

Luz blamed former Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco for the confusion. He said the Comelec spent "a billion pesos" for its registration project, but this only resulted in "all sorts of headaches."

Namfrel head Jose Concepcion said he had reported to Comelec officials the inability of many voters nationwide to find their names on lists posted outside the precincts where they had voted in the past.

"I went to my district of Forbes Park and saw there were so many problems, and these problems, I believe, cover the entire nation," Agence France Presse quoted Concepcion as saying.

COMPLAINTS/ A17

15 more killed in poll-related incidents

Election less violent but more deadly, says AFP

By Christian V. Esguerra, Alcuin Papa, Nelson Forte Flores and PDI Bureaus

THE GIRL screamed, "*Tatay, tatay ko* (Daddy, my daddy)," as she struggled to get into the emergency room of a Cavite hospital, where her father lay dying after an assassin had shot him in the head.

In Caloocan City, two men on a motorcycle lobbed a grenade at the headquarters of a mayoral candidate, blasting to death two women campaign workers.

In the far south of the country, another mayoral candidate was traveling in a convoy when dozens of gunmen raked the vehicles with rifle fire, killing three of his supporters.

Millions of Filipinos voted yesterday in what police and election officials described as "generally peaceful" elections, but tell that to 11-year-old Michelle Pacris of Silang, Cavite.

Her father Mike, a former member of the New People's Army (NPA), was among at least 15 people killed in the hours preceding and during the voting.

The fatalities raised to about 100 the death toll in political violence connected with the elections since campaigning began in mid-December. Among the dead were 29 local politicians.

Agence France-Presse listed an overall total of 109 deaths.

This year's elections were clearly more violent than the polls in 1998, when 50 people were killed and 144 were wounded. Among the fatalities that year were 14 politicians.

The elder Pacris, a top aide of Cavite Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi, was riding away in a Toyota SUV after casting his ballot in Barangay Biga in Silang, Cavite, at around 2:20 p.m. yesterday when two men opened fire. His driver was unhurt. Although the police are looking into the possibility that the NPA had a hand in the killing, Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police chief, said some of Pacris's supposed enemies could have masterminded the killing.

Rosales said the victim had been a target of several death threats since he joined Maliksi's camp.

Pacris, also a former labor leader, had allegedly caught the ire of progressive groups after he was suspected of being the brains behind a reported crackdown by Maliksi on the labor sector inside the special economic zones in Cavite.

15 MORE KILLED/ A8

Losers' agony could last 6 months, says De Venecia

NAKU... ALAM KO YAN!

By Philip C. Tubeza

TAKE IT from a warrior who has tasted defeat like blood in the mouth.

"My house was one big funeral parlor," Speaker Jose de Venecia told the INQUIRER last week, recalling the 1998 national elections where he ran for president and lost.

It took him six months to recover, he said.

The mere act of remembering made De Venecia speak in the first, second and third persons in the same breath: "*Kawawa ang matatalo* (Pity the losers). I experienced that. You feel terrible."

And, not to forget, "Your support-

LOSERS'/ A18